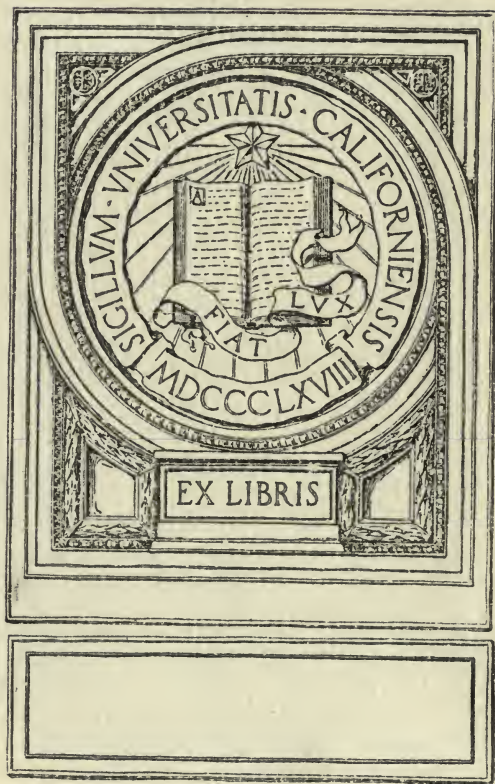


*A Year  
in Public Life*

*Mrs. C. S. Peel.*



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THE END OF THE WORLD



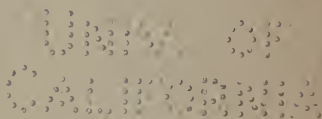
A YEAR IN PUBLIC LIFE

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# A YEAR IN PUBLIC LIFE

BY  
MRS. C. S. PEEL



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1919

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THE END  
ALPHABETICALLY

*Printed in Great Britain*

TO  
MY FATHER AND MOTHER  
LONG SINCE DEAD  
BUT WHO I THINK STILL INTEREST THEMSELVES  
IN THE  
DOINGS OF THEIR DAUGHTER

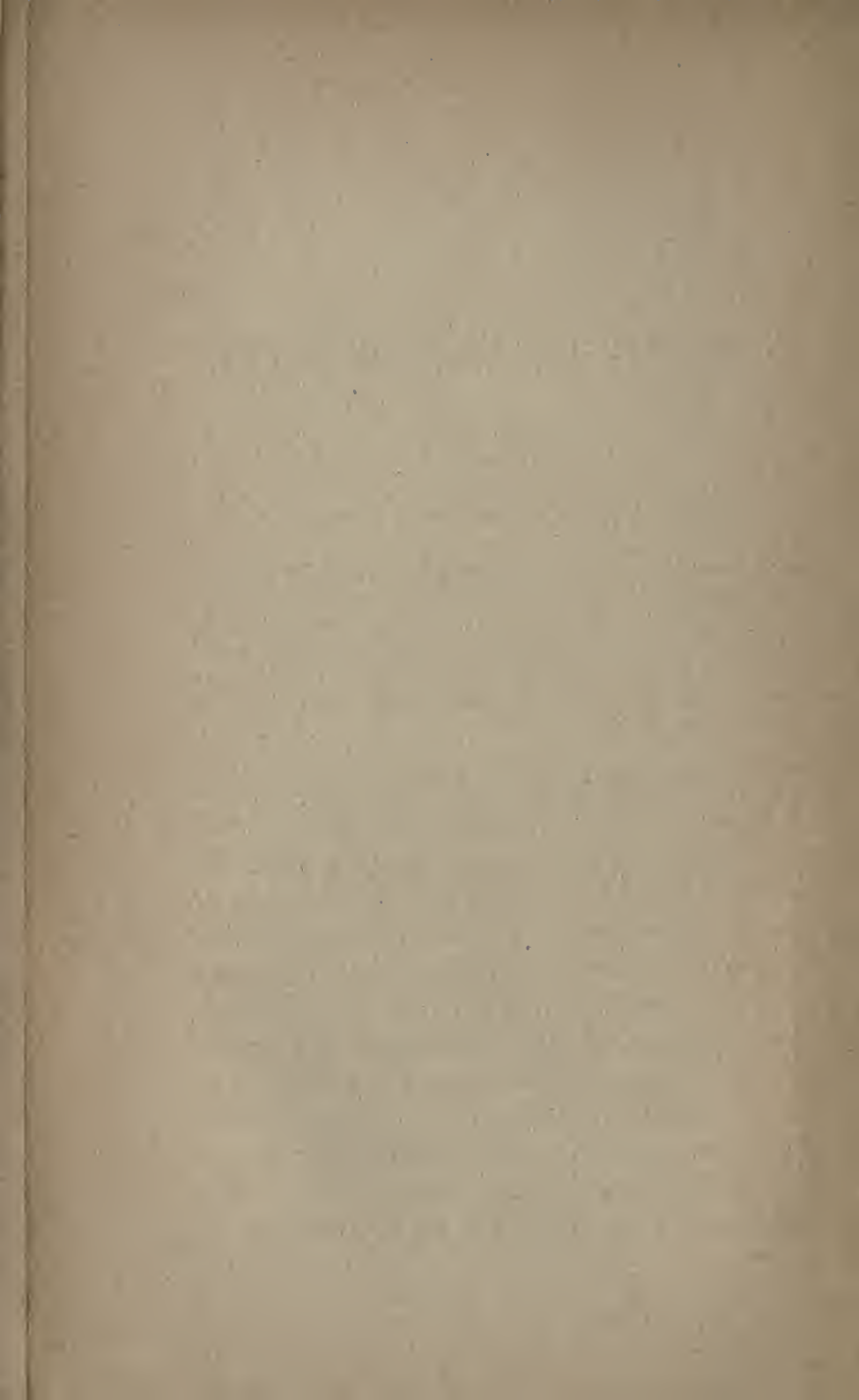
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# A YEAR IN PUBLIC LIFE

## CHAPTER I

### EARLY DAYS IN THE FOOD MINISTRY

The Appointment of Lord Devonport as Food Controller—Grosvenor House—How I came to be a Ministry of Food Official—"United Workers"—An interview with Sir Charles Bathurst—Sir Henry Rew—Mrs. Pember Reeves—"Round about £1 a week"—How Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Asquith work—Our Partnership—Furnishing a Ballroom—We plan out our Campaign.

WHEN reading Memoirs I have often reviled the author's discretion, for the more indiscreet the more interesting the book is apt to be. The ideal book of Recollections, from the point of view of the reader, is of the order which "leaves nothing for the Day of Judgment," which criticism is said to have been made by Mr. Gladstone of Purcell's *Life of Manning*. But now that I essay to write a book of Recollections, I, too, alas! find myself obliged to be discreet—so discreet that I have given up any attempt at writing a history of Food Control, and confined my attention to the lighter side of my Ministry of Food experiences.

## 2 A YEAR IN PUBLIC LIFE

Still, much remains which may be said of the happenings both great and small of that year during which I played a part, if a humble one, in public life. Perhaps it is because my part was humble that I may be able to present to the readers of this book scenes which the writer of more importance would consider unworthy of notice, for if some Memoirs lose in interest because their authors cannot tell all they know, others fail because they do not tell all which they might.

The important person no doubt finds it difficult to put himself in the place of the unimportant person ; he assumes that much which is known to him is known to every one, forgetting, for example, that to many people the life of London is represented by the Army and Navy Stores and a *matinée* at the Criterion ; to others by May meetings and the restrained splendours of the Windsor Hotel !

Vast numbers of people have never met a Food Controller ; they have never seen the Prime Minister's front door, much less the interior of 10 Downing Street. They have never entered the House of Lords and never will. (I have only once been there myself, and then it was to listen to the speeches of various old gentlemen who continually referred to women as "irresponsible persons.") Others there are who do not know if Lord Northcliffe's hair is black or red (it is, as a matter of fact,

## EARLY DAYS IN THE FOOD MINISTRY 3

all but black, and he bears a strong resemblance to Napoleon); or why mayors have parlours, and what they do in them; and yet they, like myself, are passionately curious about all such matters. It is for these nice human folk and for my own pleasure that I write this artless chronicle of twelve months' work in the Ministry of Food.

. . . . .

I imagine that there are to-day no three names better known in our country than those of Lord Devonport, Lord Rhondda, and Mr. Clynes, and this for the reason that they are connected with the intimate details of our lives! It was they who ordained we should or should not have bacon for our breakfast or jam for our tea.

When husbands grumbled wives made a whipping-boy of the Food Controller, and I have heard the demand of a child for jam dismissed with the words: "There ain't none, and if you're not a good boy I'll ask Lord Rhondda never to let you have no more neither."

It fell to my lot to work under the direction of these three Food Controllers, though the third—Mr. Clynes (formerly Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food)—did not become Controller until after the sad death of Lord Rhondda, which occurred after I had left the Ministry.

Three men differing so utterly in personality it



would be difficult to find ; they seemed to me alike in two respects only—that they were all more or less self-made men, though Lord Rhondda had enjoyed more advantages in his early life than had either Lord Devonport or Mr. Clynes, and that all three suffered in health owing to their anxious and arduous work. Lord Devonport resigned owing to ill-health ; Lord Rhondda, after a long illness, died while yet in harness, and Mr. Clynes in 1917 was very ill with pneumonia.

Although, as every one knows, War was declared on the 4th of August, 1914, it was not until December, 1916, that Lord Devonport was appointed Food Controller.

By that time rapidly rising prices made it so necessary that some central form of control should be established that, after much consultation, Mr. Lloyd George telegraphed for Lord Devonport, who was in the country, and at a subsequent interview, asked him to accept the position of Food Controller. Lord Devonport once told me that it was a beautiful sunny day on which he received the summons. He was looking forward to a rest and the enjoyment of his garden, and when the message reached him he did not feel at all inclined to return to town, neither did he desire to become Food Controller, but ultimately consented to accept the position, persuaded thereto by the Prime Minister, whose personal magnetism is so



great that he seems able to persuade most people to do that which he desires of them.

Having secured a Controller, a Bill was promptly passed establishing a Ministry of Food, the control of food to cease twelve months after the end of the War, or on any earlier date, the Food Controller being appointed for the purpose of economising and maintaining the food supply of the country.

Lord Devonport appointed Sir Henry Rew, then an assistant secretary in the Board of Agriculture, first secretary of the new Ministry, Mr. Beveridge of the Board of Trade second secretary, and Captain Tallents an assistant secretary. Sir Henry had been closely connected with the various committees which had hitherto dealt with our food supply, while Mr. Beveridge and Captain Tallents had also in the Board of Trade played an important part in matters connected with Food Control.

While speaking of the men who were connected from the first with our War-time housekeeping it may be of interest to give a short sketch of the occurrences which led to the formation of the Ministry of Food.

During the first weeks of the War there was something approaching to panic with regard to food; people bought wildly, and a consequent sharp rise in prices was the result. The Government promptly set up a Cabinet Committee on

Food Supplies ; returns of stocks of all foodstuffs in the country were obtained and arrangements made for a regular collection of information ; a Royal Sugar Commission was established, and at the same time export of food except by licence was prohibited, while the Board of Agriculture at once appointed a Consultative Committee to assist in stimulating production.

In the autumn of 1914 the immediate position as regards wheat supplies was more or less satisfactory, but the outlook for the future was not reassuring, and became less so when the Dardanelles was closed. True, there was wheat in plenty in the United States and Canada, but had our Government joined openly in the competition for this supply prices would have soared to most undesirable heights. To deal with a difficult situation a secret Committee was set up in November, 1914, and during the next few months purchases were made, stored, and distributed through the usual trade channels. In the spring of 1915 a Committee was formed to deal with Indian wheat, and large quantities were shipped to this country between then and August, 1915.

Although the Government had had, of course, at once to buy food of all kinds for the Army and Navy, they at first dealt only in sugar and wheat for civilian requirements. But during the winter of 1914-15 France and Italy bought largely of

## EARLY DAYS IN THE FOOD MINISTRY 7

wheat, and this competition naturally proved as prejudicial to the interests of those two nations as to our own, and this resulted in an agreement that the purchases of France, Italy, and Britain should be made through one agent. An allied purchasing Committee came into being on January 5th, 1916, comprising representatives of the three countries, and for nine months they met daily to conduct business.

It was, however, one matter to buy food from overseas countries and another to bring it to our shores. Wheat might be bought in overseas markets, and there it would remain unless ships could be obtained to convey it to its destination. It was not then considered advisable to requisition tonnage and it had therefore to be secured in the open market. At this time the loss of shipping by enemy attack was comparatively small, but cumulative, and as not only Allied but neutral shipping became involved the reduction of tonnage became extremely serious.

Late in 1915 a Ship Requisitioning Committee was formed, and this body, together with the Ship Licensing Committee, dealt with the tonnage problem.

From then onward the question of the food supply of these islands became more and more complicated and anxious. On October 11th, 1916, the Royal Commissioner on Wheat Supplies was

appointed, and owing to the arrangements then made, all speculation in wheat was brought to an end.

The first article of food the price of which was controlled was milk, and for this fixing of price the Board of Trade was responsible.

On the 17th of October a debate in the House of Commons on Profiteering took place, and it was then that a report furnished by the Board of Trade was discussed and Mr. Winston Churchill, Sir Edward Carson, Mr. Runciman, and Captain Bathurst, now Lord Bledisloe, spoke on the subject of Food Control. As I have already said, a Bill had been prepared, but the Government would not run the risk of attempting to pass it. During this autumn the Asquith Coalition Government went out and the Lloyd George Government came in ; it was the Asquith Government which decided to create a Ministry of Food and the Lloyd George Government which actually did appoint a Food Controller.

It was, however, neither shortage of food nor the submarine menace which caused the Government to appoint a Controller, for it was not until the beginning of February, 1917, that those responsible for the country's welfare realised how serious was the submarine peril, and up to the time of Lord Devonport's coming there certainly was little or no distress, except, indeed, among the



## EARLY DAYS IN THE FOOD MINISTRY 9

professional classes and those living on very small fixed incomes. In other classes there was evidence of unusual prosperity. The cause of the bitter feeling which existed was the widespread belief in "profiteering."

For the first two years of the War private enterprise was responsible for supplying us with food, and the trader no doubt considered that the man who took the risk and would have to bear the loss of failure was legitimately entitled to a substantial profit if the venture proved a success.

It is argued in some quarters that the trader took no risk, that prices of all foods were bound to rise, but records show that prices did fluctuate, and the corn merchants certainly would have suffered had the Dardanelles campaign proved successful and Russian and Roumanian stocks been released. As it was, the news of the first Dardanelles attack caused a break in the market. Still the profits made in many cases undoubtedly were extreme, and the feeling grew that it was horrible that large profits should be made out of the miseries of mankind, though, indeed, when one comes to think of it, even in times of peace such a state of affairs was nothing new. The publication of certain balance-sheets showing the gains made by dealers in food were commented upon by the Press; the public voiced its disapproval, until at last, as is so often the case, the people governed the Government

and the machine by which Food supply and Food prices were to be controlled was created.

Lord Devonport, who before his elevation to the baronetage and then to the peerage was Mr. Hudson Ewbanke Kearley, was at the time when he became Food Controller, Chairman of the Port of London Authority, which position he still holds. He is a man of fine physique, virile, determined, of emphatic and decided manner. As he talks he emphasises his words with expressive action. I remember being greatly impressed on one occasion when I had a long interview with him by the extraordinarily clear way in which he put a very complicated subject before me, scarcely ever pausing for a word or correcting a statement.

At first Lord Devonport was lodged in Gwydyr House, Whitehall, but he moved on December 28th, 1916, into Grosvenor House, the town residence of the Duke of Westminster (which was formerly called Gloucester House, and inhabited by the Duke of Gloucester, younger brother of George III, for whom it was originally built). Approaching it from Park Lane one passes on the right the corner house so long tenanted by the great Disraeli, and enters the courtyard of Grosvenor House, which is screened from the street by quite an imposing colonnade. The rooms on the south side look out over a garden, and on the right across the Park.

Before its conversion into a Ministry Grosvenor



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House contained a very valuable collection of pictures and of furniture, the gallery boasting specimens of nearly all the great masters, ancient and modern, including Gainsborough's famous "Blue Boy."

Lord Devonport was lodged in a charming oak-panelled room on the first floor, overlooking the garden. This room opened into the library, which was used as a conference room, though singularly ill-adapted for this purpose, as although not very large it was almost impossible to hear what anyone said in it. From the conference room access was gained to the room inhabited by Sir Henry Rew, while on the other side of Lord Devonport's room was a lobby in which his messenger mounted guard, and into which opened the apartment of his private secretaries, Mr. Paul and Mr. Hughes Gibb.

Now let me explain how it was that about two months after the appointment of Lord Devonport I found myself an official of the Ministry of Food.

Why it should have been my fate to become a writer of cookery books I do not know. I never wanted to write one, and I never want to write another. "Thank God," as some honest soul once said, "I am greedy," but not greedier than many other people. But even my earliest experiences seem to be connected with food. At my first party, meeting a hitherto unknown dainty, a chocolate

éclair, I bit it. In return it rudely spat custard at me which dribbled all down the front of my party frock. Oh, the shame ! the mortification ! Again, the first time I was ever taken out to lunch I trotted off full of excitement to find cold lamb and milk-pudding. It wasn't my idea of a party at all, and I wept, to the mystification of all present.

Later, I went to stay at Mr. Thomas Bright's, near Rochdale, and was honoured by an invitation to dinner with the great John Bright, and, sad to say, my chief recollection of that occasion is the pudding. It consisted of ice-cream moulded and coloured to represent peaches served on a bed of leaves. Now I should like to be able to remember more about John Bright and less about his pudding.

But to proceed.

Some eighteen months before the date of my Food Ministry appointment I had become a member of a society known as United Workers (the Chairman of which was Sir Charles Stewart, the Public Trustee). Sir Theodore Chambers, now Controller of the National War Savings Committee, was a United Worker, and it was through Sir Theodore, whom I had known before, that I began to speak for the United Workers, and later for the National War Savings Committee.

By January, 1917, it had become evident that great economy must be made by the nation in its consumption of food, and the National War Savings

## EARLY DAYS IN THE FOOD MINISTRY 13

speakers, who then and later carried on such valuable Food Economy propaganda, were instructed to emphasise this point in their appeals. I invited about forty people to come to my house one Sunday afternoon to hear Lady Ferrers and Sir Theodore speak on the subject. Amongst the audience were Lady Gisborough, Lady Allen, and Mrs. Richard Taylor, three ladies who promptly responded to Lady Ferrers' invitation to hold Food Economy meetings.

Many other private food meetings were held, at which Lady Ferrers, Lady Nott-Bower, Sir Theodore Chambers, myself and others spoke; but the first great public Food Economy meeting (organised by the Women's Sub-Committee of the Lord Mayor's Committee for War Savings, of which I was a member) was held at the Adelphi Theatre. Sir Charles Bathurst, Miss Chamberlain, Mrs. Pember Reeves, Lady Tree, Lady Mond (who generously paid the expenses of the meeting), and myself were the speakers.

It was after this occasion that the Women's Sub-Committee asked Lady Nott-Bower and myself to see Lord Devonport on certain questions regarding food. Lord Devonport was away ill, and Sir Charles Bathurst received us. After we had talked for a few minutes Sir Charles began to look pathetic; details about bones for stock, suet for puddings, and fat for frying were matters with which he evidently

felt himself scarcely fitted to deal, and he summoned to his aid Mrs. Pember Reeves, who was then working in the Ration Section of the Ministry.

In the midst of all these activities I received a telephone message from my old friend Mr. Richard Taylor, asking me to make an appointment to see Mr. Prothero, with, I believe, some idea of my working for the Board of Agriculture. But before this was arranged I was summoned to Grosvenor House to interview Sir Henry Rew, who asked if I would accept the position which I afterwards filled in partnership with Mrs. Pember Reeves.

Sir Henry Rew impressed me at that interview as being a shy and nervous man, and as I, though few people believe it, am a shy and nervous woman, I really do not know which appeared to be the more terrified of the other—Sir Henry of me or I of him. However, I soon recovered from my terror, for Sir Henry was invariably kind, and although over-worked always willing to give attention to our suggestions, while the helpfulness of his secretary, Mr. Stanley, I shall always remember with gratitude.

I do not recollect that any fixed duties were assigned to me at this interview. It seemed that public opinion was in favour of there being women in the Ministry, so women there had to be, and Sir Henry desired that I should begin my work as quickly as possible. As far as I remember my interview with him took place at the end of



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February, and as my publishers were most kind in allowing me to break various contracts I was able to take up my position at the Ministry on March 1st, and was allotted as an office a ballroom in which many famous pictures were formerly hung, though when I took up my abode in "No. 3 on the Ground Floor" the walls of this apartment were chastely veiled in some grey mottled fabric, and its floor covered by brown linoleum. Three telephones stood upon the floor attached by long cords to the grey walls, like so many little dogs on chains. Tables, chairs—there were none, and looking very small and fragile amid so much space stood Mrs. Pember Reeves, my co-director—a slight, grey-haired woman, with brilliant dark eyes, and, as I was to discover, to my joy, the keenest sense of humour.

I can see her now in her plain black dress with its little white collar (which she called her uniform) and the necklace of seed pearls which she always wore, standing in the room of a departing assistant secretary who much admired her qualities while he shook her warmly by the hand and assured her that he did hope "our wives will make each other's acquaintance," and the twinkling glance she threw at me.

Mrs. Reeves, of Scottish parentage, was born and brought up in New Zealand, educated at Christchurch, and married at the age of nineteen. It was

after the birth of her two elder children that, "feeling so dreadfully ignorant," to use her own words, she returned to college. It is, perhaps, because she has known what it is to study hard in the intervals of tending her children, helped only by a little nursery maid of fourteen, and having the entire care of the babies at night, that she feels such sympathy with working mothers, and can smile—though still with sympathy (for Mrs. Reeves is one of the most understanding of women)—at the mothers with nurses and under-nurses and governesses who would keep the moneyless mother tied day and night to her children, lest they might assist to lessen the "maternal responsibility" of these overworked drudges.

Mrs. Reeves was not able to remain at college long enough to take her degree, as her husband's duties took him to Wellington, and not until her children could be left in the care of their grandmother did Magdalen Reeves pay her first visit to England to make the acquaintance of her own and her husband's relations, to return with added experience to help her husband in his work as Minister of Labour and of Education. Later, the whole family came to live in London, Mr. Reeves filling the position of High Commissioner for New Zealand.

It was when Mrs. Reeves came to see the conditions under which so many of our working



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people live that she began to work for the betterment of social conditions. Money was put at her disposal in order that she should make an investigation into the causes of infant mortality, and it was when engaged on this task that she obtained the information which she made use of later in her well-known book, *Round about a £1 a week*, a chronicle not of slum life, but of the lives of many sober, industrious, honest folk.

It was a happiness to me to work with Mrs. Reeves, for though our lives had been lived under very different conditions, our experiences have led us to form to a considerable extent the same conclusions, and we worked in sympathy and close understanding.

The other day a man was describing to me the way in which Mr. Asquith and Mr. Lloyd George worked. "Watch Asquith," he said, "reading a report sentence by sentence with the closest attention, until by sheer force of reason he comes to his decision. Then watch Lloyd George—he just smells out the meaning of a thing. He has the intuition of a dog—a woman." ("Thank you," said I.) This description I think applies to some extent to the way in which Mrs. Reeves and I did our work: she, so to speak, painted miniatures while I daubed posters, and as some people like miniatures and others prefer posters our partnership thrived quite satisfactorily.

It is often supposed that women cannot work in amity with other women, but this has never been my experience. Twelve hard, difficult, and rather nerve-racking months spent in the Ministry of Food have left me, I am glad to say, the richer by several close friends—amongst them Mrs. Reeves and the members of our staff.

But to go back to that cold morning in March when on entering No. 3 I discovered my partner awaiting me.

“Well, my dear,” she remarked, looking round our ballroom, “so here we are.”

“We are,” I agreed. “But there doesn’t seem to be very much else here, does there?”

Then, quite unknowing of the laws which control such matters in Government offices, we proceeded to explore, bent on discovering furniture for our ballroom. Finding a carpet looking like a gigantic Swiss roll and quite unemployed in an empty room adjoining, with the help of Hyder, the head messenger, we commandeered it. I fancy that such a floor covering ought by rights to have been used by no one less important than a minister or a permanent secretary—strange title for a person who seems nowadays to be singularly non-permanent.

Some one did try to take away that carpet later on, but as I and my chair were seated upon it and refused to move they mournfully gave up the

## EARLY DAYS IN THE FOOD MINISTRY 19

attempt. A solid and magnificent hat and coat stand, which tossed wild mahogany arms to heaven in every direction, would, we thought, do nicely to hang our feminine belongings upon ; but that hat-stand disappeared in the night, and we had to content ourselves with some modest pegs, more or less hidden by a tottering screen, behind which lurked a washhand-stand.

Certain kinds of writing-tables, we learned, could only be used by fortunate persons whose salaries exceeded a certain sum, and, finally, we were made to realise kindly but firmly that we had committed a gross impropriety in commandeering even a chair when establishment officers existed for the purpose of promising the supply of such articles of furniture as were suitable to the position to which the Food Controller had called us. As, however, Government furniture, even unto the tea-cups and dusters, belongs, I understand, to the Office of Works, and the Office of Works, like the Treasury, cannot be hurried, the lawful method of furnishing our ballroom would not have been so quick as the one which we adopted.

Apropos of furniture, it was whispered that another Ministry official, unpaid, and something approaching to a millionaire, when put in charge of a section, petitioned humbly for a carpet and an umbrella-stand. The carpet was refused, because he was not in receipt of the salary which entitled

its owner to protect his feet from the chill blast, but to make up for this, five months later seven men from the Board of Works arrived to fit up stabling for 144 umbrellas !

By the time we had found two chairs and a waste-paper basket the Press arrived. The Press was very interested in us—why I do not quite know, except that women employed in other capacities than as secretaries to other secretaries, shorthand typists and clerks, were at that time (and I fear still are) rarely to be found in Government employ.

The Press leant against our grey walls, notebook in hand, and asked us what we proposed to do. We had but a vague idea what we proposed to do, because no one as yet had suggested that we should do anything except become Directors of Women's Service in the Ministry of Food. Who were the women whose services we were to direct was not as yet clear. However, the Press was very kind, and wrote all sorts of pleasant things about us. Indeed, throughout the whole of my work in the Ministry the Press showed me much kindness. I have been a journalist since I was a girl of seventeen, and I appreciate deeply the goodwill shown to me by members of my profession. For the first few days after my appointment was published my telephone rang all day and far into the night, and my parlour-maid, Winifred Winch, dealt with the position in a masterly manner. Later, she relieved me of all

## EARLY DAYS IN THE FOOD MINISTRY 21

housekeeping responsibilities, in order that I might give my entire energies to my work.

It was after the immediate curiosity of the Press had been satisfied, tables and chairs, pens and ink, and the services of a shorthand-typist secured, that we sat down to take breath and to consider how best we might assist the cause of voluntary economy in food.



## CHAPTER II

### THE MINISTRY UNDER LORD DEVONPORT

Our Voluntary Economy Programme—National Kitchens—War Economy Leaflets—Visitors—An interview with Lord Devonport—The National War Savings Committee—Mr. Kennedy Jones arrives—Government women chauffeurs—"Slippery Anne"—Clapham Junction—The Westminster Bridge Road Kitchen—"Those youthful hen birds"—Sir Alfred Butt—Lord Devonport resigns—The man who held the dog.

**S**UMMED up briefly, the position as regards the nation's food was then as follows :—

Great Britain did not and could not produce as much food as she needed and home reserves of food were dangerously low. There was food and to spare in other countries, but to bring it to us necessitated the use of ships, and the supply of shipping was short—and becoming shorter. Further, of the available shipping a considerable proportion was needed for the carriage of munitions of war. It was therefore necessary to increase production and reduce consumption, and not only was it necessary to reduce consumption, but to reduce waste, and not only waste occasioned by the throwing away of food fit for human use, but waste occasioned by bad or improper cooking.



## MINISTRY UNDER LORD DEVONPORT 23

Put still more briefly, the people needed to know :

(a) The reasons which brought about a food shortage, and (b) the best means of meeting that shortage. It was also part of our duty to persuade the public to help the Government, for only by the goodwill of the people could the necessary reduction of consumption be obtained.

After some consideration we decided :—

1. That Food Economy meetings ought to be held in every town and village.

2. That any society or person organising such meetings ought to be able to secure the services of a speaker.

3. That Ministry of Food speakers ought to be instructed in their subject.

4. That arrangements ought to be made which would enable a propaganda meeting to be followed by practical cookery demonstrations.

5. That there should be at the disposal of the public a supply of patriotic and practical printed matter.

At that time the shortage of breadstuffs was especially serious (many people even now refuse to believe this), and as bread is the chief article of food of the poorest people, it was of little use to ask them to eat less of it, if one was not prepared to help them to do so by suggesting the use of such substitute foods as were available and sufficiently cheap, and

by making it possible that they should learn wholesome yet simple methods of preparing them.

To carry out our programme it was necessary to select a panel of speakers, and to hold educational conferences.

Experience in War Savings work had proved to us that the first task of any speaker is to obtain the sympathy of the audience, and this is not effected by preaching and hectoring. Mrs. Reeves never made a truer statement than when she assured our speakers that to succeed they must rely on the right intention and intelligence of the public and not mistake difference of opinion for lack of goodwill, for the whole nation, whatever its political or other beliefs, is alive with intelligence and desire to do right, though differences exist in people's minds as to the best way of doing right. Such differences must be met with understanding. The watchwords of the successful speaker must be goodwill and sympathy.

The public, however, did not wait for us to mature our plans; directly it realised that we had become officials of the Ministry of Food a vast correspondence flowed in upon us, and strings of visitors made it necessary that our secretary should arrange appointments for us at ten-minute intervals through the day.

We received invitations to speak at meetings in almost every town in the country, and when it

was impossible for one of us to address the audience we were asked to send a representative, and so by degrees we elaborated our programme. Everywhere we met with offers of help. The Domestic Subjects teachers, who were in a position to give specially valuable assistance, entered most wholeheartedly into the campaign all over the country, and soon Food Economy Committees were formed and meetings, demonstrations, more Food Economy exhibitions and Food Economy shops (originally, I believe, the creation of the National War Savings Committee) organised. The Press (without which little could have been done) lent its aid, and both in London and the provinces devoted much space to preaching the gospel of Food Saving.

It was very early in our career—the second day, in fact—that we discussed the question of National, or as they were then called Communal or Public Kitchens. It was evident that conditions as regards food, labour, and fuel must become more difficult and such kitchens might become a necessity. A few days later we obtained the consent of Lord Devonport to organise a Ministry of Food Experimental Public Kitchen, which was opened in the following May by Her Majesty the Queen, and of which more elsewhere.

It was the London County Council who suggested the use of a travelling demonstrating kitchen as a valuable form of propaganda, and we had many

interviews with Miss Catherine Gordon with regard to this idea. A few weeks later I went with Miss Gordon to see one of these cookery demonstrations at the Public Library in Walworth. Oil stoves were used, and they, with the other simple apparatus required, the material to be cooked and two demonstrators, were all packed into a motor-car driven by one of those girl chauffeurs who have now become so familiar a sight. The travelling kitchen then proceeded to any place where its services might be required, all that the demonstrators then needing being a room, a table and an audience.

At the demonstration which I attended, amongst the audience was a lady, accompanied by twins at a very early stage of their career, attired in white shawls, white lace veils, and long white robes. She told me that she possessed four other children, and I marvelled, as I have often marvelled before and since, at the strength of mother love and pride which made that woman add to her already, one would think, somewhat overwhelming work by the continual washing necessitated by those white garments. The way in which this mother jogged and patted her babies into quiescence, listened to the instructions of the demonstrators and managed to write recipes in her notebook, would have filled a conjurer with admiration. For that matter, the way in which many working-class women keep



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house and bring up their children on minute and fluctuating weekly incomes resembles a very clever conjuring trick, of which I for one have never learned the secret.

How many of the worthy people who go and "talk to the poor" could attempt to house, feed, and clothe a family of six or seven on 25s. to 30s. a week (quite an ordinary pre-War wage); work surrounded by a tribe of little children; be kept awake at night by a teething baby, and remain cheerful and uncomplaining? Many a time I have been asked to go and talk to working mothers. If I have ventured to do it I have returned feeling that I have learned from them far more than they have ever learned from me.

As the busy days flew by we soon discovered that there was an enormous demand for War Cookery information and recipes. People did not know how to use War flour—it made their bread and puddings heavy: they were unaccustomed to use barley and maize, and if they could not have meat and vegetables and a pudding what *were* they to eat? they demanded. How could they manage with so little sugar? How could they cook with so little fat?

The cookery books of pre-War days were not very useful, so I obtained permission to start an Experimental Kitchen in the Ministry, and to publish Food Economy leaflets, of which millions were distributed.

As regards food, this great War found us an extraordinarily ignorant, wasteful, and extravagant people, and extravagant not only inasmuch as we threw away into pig-tubs and ash-bins large quantities of wholesome food, but because we cooked so unscientifically that we extracted from the excellent material at our command but a small proportion of the nourishment it contained.

The general mass of the people had little idea where their food came from or how it was obtained, and they regarded meat, sugar, potatoes, and tea as absolute necessities of life. Deprived of sugar they were convinced that their children would die.

A valuable cereal such as maize (containing a high percentage of fat in comparison with that contained in any other cereal save oatmeal), of which a good supply was obtainable, was scarcely known to the average working woman, or for the matter of that, the average middle-class woman. These dear souls had never heard of such a dish as Polenta ; had never made a maize pudding, and not infrequently refused to try to do so on the score that maize was pig-food. Assured that in South Africa and America maize was largely eaten by human beings, one was met with the statement that it might "do very well for people out there, but not for us." The number of things which people could eat and do in that vast and vague region of "out there" which it was impossible for us to eat and do was truly remarkable.



Many well-known people visited us to ask how they might best help the cause. Lady Sandhurst was greatly interested, and Mrs. Rochfort Maguire helped us on several occasions to send out invitations to meetings and conferences.

Amongst my callers one day was a woman who has done much public work. She was annoyed with me because she said I had promised to send a speaker to a certain meeting who had failed to appear. I asked my secretary for the correspondence ; none was forthcoming, yet my caller declared that the matter had been arranged by letter.

“ Was the meeting a Food Economy meeting ? ”  
I queried.

“ No, a —— meeting.”

“ But surely,” said I, “ it is the —— which deals with that question, and am I not right in thinking that you are their president ? ”

My visitor, it seemed, was scolding me for the sins of her own department.

I can forgive that lady for her somewhat rude manner, but I cannot forgive the lack of humour which prevented her from enjoying the joke !

Amongst our other duties was that of attending various Ministerial conferences. Returning one morning from the Conference Room, I beheld Mrs. Reeves surrounded by what appeared at first sight a deputation from a beauty chorus. Ap-

proaching nearer I discovered that the ladies who were interviewing her were Lady Londonderry, Lady Massereene and Ferrard, Mrs. Vere Chaplin, and Mrs. Eric Chaplin, who were discussing in the most learned fashion such questions as the disposal of "swill" (by which elegant term the food refuse of camps and canteens is known), grease traps for sinks, prices at which cooked food could be offered to the customer, and similar details of canteen management.

At that time the inner needs of the Ministry staff were ministered to by a canteen run for private profit. This arrangement did not give satisfaction, and Lady Londonderry, representing the Women's Legion, offered to undertake our housekeeping for us. I am afraid they found it a very tiresome business, for the basement of Grosvenor House, though doubtless quite convenient for the purpose for which it had originally been intended, was not at all well fitted for a canteen. Also by this time, too, the Women's Legion had begun to feel the result of their own activities. They had taken so many cooks to work in camps and canteens that the supply, never too large, was seriously diminished, and anyone concerning themselves with the provision of cooked food which had to be sold at small cost, and yet make a sufficient profit to pay expenses, found themselves confronted with all the difficulties which shortage of labour and steadily

rising wages entail. Lady Londonderry, the two Mrs. Chaplins, Lady Massereene and Lady Midleton all took a part in the management of the canteen.

It was some time before either Mrs. Reeves or myself saw Lord Devonport. He was ill and away for some weeks after our arrival. My first interview with him was quite unofficial. Biscuits were at that moment my bane, for one official said that they were included in the voluntary cereal ration and others that they were not. That very morning I had obtained three different rulings on the point, and felt that "this correspondence must now cease." Meeting Lord Devonport on the stairs I boldly accosted him :

"Lord Devonport, will you tell me, please, if biscuits are included in the voluntary cereal ration ? "

Lord Devonport looked at me rather fiercely (I don't believe he had then the vaguest idea who I was or why I should want to know). There was a pause, then : "Yes, they are," he replied firmly.

"Thank you," said I, and the interview ended.

It was shortly after our coming to the Ministry that an amalgamation was made with the National War Savings Committee, who were to undertake the General Voluntary Economy propaganda work. Weekly conferences took place, presided over by Sir Henry Rew (who generally drank tea and ate a bun, which creates a friendly air at any con-

ference), attended by Sir Robert Kindersley, Sir Theodore Chambers, and other members of the National War Savings Committee, one or two other Ministry officials, and ourselves.

A little later again Mr. Kennedy Jones made his first appearance in the part of Director-General of Food Economy. We were naturally brought much in contact with Mr. Jones, a man of strong personality and sense of humour, and one who, I imagine, was profoundly bored with the red tape of official life. Certainly his manners and methods were distinctly unofficial. He always reminded me of the "strong man" in a modern drawing-room melodrama, and I recommend him to Miss Ethel M. Dell as a model on which to form her next hero. But he was kind to me in patches, and once lent me his car when I was fretting on the steps of the Ministry, fearing that I should be late for a meeting. Young Mr. Kennedy Jones was acting as chauffeur, and a most excellent chauffeur he was, which reminds me that some of my experiences in Government cars driven by young ladies in khaki and fur collars would certainly have turned my hair grey had it not already been so. One or two of these girls drove as if London was a desolate waste; they appeared to be blind to the fact that such things as omnibuses, cabs, carts, and even other Government cars existed. Being a woman has just one or two advantages in this world—I



could say frankly that I was terrified and begged of my driver to proceed more slowly—though I admit she seldom took the faintest notice of my plea—but some of the men in the Ministry who felt that any protest was beneath their manly dignity suffered agonies of suppressed agitation.

The Director-General of Economy in the course of his short sojourn in the Ministry did one admirable deed (he doubtless did many more than one, but this is the one of which I happen to know most), he taught the British public some respect for bread. In England before this War bread was so cheap and so plentiful that it was wasted in a scandalous fashion. Prior to 1914 it was estimated that the nation wasted a month's supply of bread during each year, and that in a country where deaths from starvation were by no means unknown.

With Mr. Kennedy Jones came Mr. Sydney Walton (now Mr. Clynes' private secretary), always most friendly and helpful to us in our work, passing on to us any information which he thought would be useful in our speeches.

During the early spring "No. 3 on the Ground Floor" proved a chilly habitation. There was no fireplace or any other means of heating it than by small oil stoves, into which unheeding visitors were apt to charge. It became part of our clerks' duty to disentangle visitors and stoves and restore both to a seemly angle. Later on, however, we greatly

appreciated our quarters, the windows of which looked over the garden.

As our work increased we were obliged to add to our staff, and accommodation being at a premium had to bestow them at tables dotted about all over our ballroom, and with the constant coming and going of visitors this made our office so noisy that we christened it Clapham Junction.

Speaking of staff, I may say that it was many weeks before we were permitted to obtain the services of an experienced secretary. The salary we were allowed to offer was so inadequate that very naturally a person such as we required would not accept it. Had we been men no doubt we should have been granted the services of an experienced secretary trained in Civil Service routine. As it was, knowing practically nothing of this routine and able to offer only the salary of a shorthand-typist to our secretary, we struggled along as best we might. I do not believe that Mrs. Reeves ever did the shocking things that I did. She, of course, had more knowledge of official life than I—at all times an unconventional person and a hustler. In my ignorance I wrote personally to grandees who ought only to have been approached by high officials; yet they bore it so kindly, and actually answered the letters. Even now I feel faint when I think of the way in which I treated the Minute of an important personage.



It was brought to me by a brown-pinafores little girl with a pigtail. "Heavens! how silly!" said I to myself after reading it, and put it into a pigeon-hole, where it lurked for weeks. And then one day the whole of the Ministry was in a turmoil—"Where was that Minute?" By then, thank goodness, it was too late to do anything more in the matter, so one silly suggestion, at any rate, died the death it deserved.

After I had been at work for a few weeks it struck me that more Minutes than really seemed to concern us found their way to our section. At first I endeavoured to deal with them, but then it occurred to me that other people might as well do their own work. In fact, I learned the game which is played in Government offices. Schoolroom children play it with cards, and call it "Slippery Anne"; Government officials play it with Minutes, and it has no name, but its rules are well known. The man who is finally left with the Minute and obliged to answer it loses the game.

By the time that our work threatened to overwhelm us we were allowed to make other arrangements, and were fortunate in securing, through Mrs. Hoster, the services of Miss Barrett as organiser of the Speakers' Panel, and Miss Bellis, that pearl of secretaries.

So noisy did our Clapham Junction become that sometimes we were thankful to retire from it to the

garden when we wished to do any specially difficult work. Even there, with a tennis-court near by, it was often hard to prevent one's attention from being distracted by the sight of lovely young ladies in elegant knitted coats or jumpers and their attendant swains who came to disport themselves.

Wounded officers from hospitals near by were also allowed to use this garden, and I recollect one occasion on which a very crippled warrior was deposited on the lawn in a wicker chair, a table by his side, and his tea brought to him by an attentive and very pretty V.A.D. Apparently, however, in spite of her charms the patient wished to be left in solitude, for V.A.D. retired, and the one-armed tea-drinker, endeavouring, as our grandmamas used to say, "to preside at the tea equipage," managed to upset the tea-table and very nearly himself. Half of the staff of the Food Ministry must have been watching that young man from the windows, for in an incredibly short time flocks of young ladies, wearing the latest things in blouses and silk stockings, were streaming to his rescue.

During the first three months of my sojourn at the Ministry, the National Kitchen in Westminster Bridge Road occupied a great portion of my thoughts, though neither I nor Mrs. Reeves were able to give as much personal attention to the scheme as we wished, owing to the necessity for constant absences from the Ministry on speaking

tours. Whenever possible, however, I made a point of visiting kitchens of all kinds, for I was very anxious to make myself acquainted with details of kitchen management on a large scale.

Lady May (wife of Sir George May, now Deputy Quartermaster-General directing Canteens, and Secretary of the Prudential Assurance in Holborn), who was a valued and popular member of our staff, arranged for me to see the Prudential kitchens. These were then, and probably still are, managed by a lady who certainly fulfilled her duties admirably. The kitchens were a picture of cleanliness and beautifully equipped for their work of feeding over three thousand clients. I remember that all the workers were dressed in pink print frocks, and looked delightfully fresh and pretty.

Messrs. Selfridges were also good enough to give me much information, and I spent a most interesting morning in the kitchens and store-rooms of their Cooked Provision Department. I also visited large numbers of canteens and public kitchens all over England—some of them were admirable, some quite the reverse.

The General Post Office kindly gave me the opportunity of studying its luncheon club and kitchens and methods of management. The dining-rooms are very large and beautifully light and airy. My visit there took place shortly after a bomb had fallen on the Post Office buildings, doing but

little damage to the building but killing a poor sentry posted near by.

Various trade houses which had luncheon clubs or canteens allowed me to study the equipment and organisation of their kitchens, and one or two well-known restaurants permitted me to do the same. Also for my own satisfaction I privately employed an accountant having great knowledge of kitchen finance, to explain various systems of account keeping, and I further obtained information from German papers of the methods adopted in their national kitchens. This I did in order to fit myself to speak and to write on Public Kitchens.

Certainly there was no monotony about our work in Grosvenor House, and it had its humours. Changes were frequent, both of staff and of rooms, and often one would hear snatches of conversation, such as : " Where is So-and-so's secretary now ? " " Oh, he's in the duchess's bathroom," or " Fats have moved, haven't they ? " " Yes, they're in the nursery now." " Miss Dash, will you please ring up ' Cakes and Pastry,' and ask if the new order is through ? " " Where have Public Meals got to ? " " They used to be in No. 9, but Exchange says Fish is there now," and so forth.

On one occasion a new order afforded us considerable mirth. It concerned Poultry Food, and ran as follows :—

Scheme (B).—" Other birds, being hen birds



hatched since January 1st, 1916, and not receiving rations under Scheme (A), will be able to obtain certificates, entitling their owners to purchase up to an amount per head per day (which will be less than 4 ozs. per day), to be fixed from time to time, according to the quantity of foodstuffs available."

One pictures those youthful hen birds hatched since January 1st applying for certificates on behalf of their owners to the Local Food Control Committee. Knowing the excitable habits of hens, it was doubtless even more difficult to persuade them to fill up their forms correctly than it sometimes proves in the case of their owners ! Heaven knows what happened when a White Minorca filled up by mistake the form of a Yellow Wyandotte or *vice versa*. If this Poultry Food Order was issued uncorrected it must have done something to lighten the gloom of life in War time.

Sometimes, too, one smiled at the strange manner in which duties were allotted to various members of the staff. Apparently, if you were, for example, an expert buyer of crochet cotton, that seemed a good reason for putting you in charge of tomatoes.

I remember laughing with Lady May, who declared that going one day to a certain section she found there a gentleman of her acquaintance. "But what are you doing here ?" she asked—"I thought you were the greatest living authority on Fish."



“Precisely,” was the bland reply, “and that is why I am controlling mangel-wurzels !”

Sir Alfred Butt, who did such good work in regard to compulsory rationing, was another of these “quick-change artists.” Why his great knowledge of matters theatrical should have fitted him to deal with compulsory rationing I cannot tell. I only know that he once, with his second-in-command, Captain Tallents, who is now in charge of the Rationing section, came down with me to the Westminster Bridge Kitchen, where I was greatly struck with his evident love for children, his interest in those who were buying their dinners, and his delight that instead of being obliged to dine off pieces of bread they could now go to the public kitchen and buy for a few pence a nourishing substantial meal. It was one of the jokes of the Ministry that Sir Alfred had brought his theatrical choruses along with him in the guise of clerks and typists, and certainly the appearance of some of the young ladies who tripped in and out of his office in Park Street would not have disgraced the front row of any ballet.

At about this time it was rumoured that Lord Devonport meant to resign.

Lord Devonport had found his work difficult and harassing, as well indeed he might, and it had been made more difficult by failing health. He contracted a severe attack of influenza, which affected

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his ears and left him for a time very deaf. Indeed to this day he is not completely recovered. His doctors advised him that he could not with safety continue to fill such an arduous post. On May 30th his resignation was announced, and on June 2nd published officially, though he remained at the Ministry for some three weeks longer.

Many months after, talking with Mr. Clynes of the early days of the Ministry of Food, the third Food Controller made use of these words : " Men build on the work of other men." When Lord Devonport accepted office he had to a great extent to create the Food Control machine, and as I remember Sir Alfred Butt expressing it, " The man who invented the steam-engine had a harder task than he who modified or improved its action."

Circumstances made Lord Devonport's task specially difficult, for the people were excited with regard to profiteering, alarmed by the submarine menace, and yet, for the most part, extraordinarily ignorant of the difficulties which beset the Government in their task of obtaining sufficient food at controlled prices. " Give us enough food at a moderate price and get on with the winning of the War," were the demands of the nation, demands to some extent antagonistic. To get on with the winning of the War necessitated the possession of vast sums of money, vast quantities of coal and munitions, and vast numbers of ships. To produce

food at home required the services of men needed in the Army ; to bring it from overseas tonnage which could ill be spared. To subsidise food was a costly process, while to reduce prices discouraged production.

Lord Devonport was blamed in some quarters because he recommended a Voluntary Economy campaign. He should have been praised, for it was a wise act. In the early part of 1917 the country was not ready for rations ; it needed education concerning the national food supply and its relation to the conduct of the War. There is no doubt that the Economy campaign, as conducted under Lord Devonport's direction, was of great value from the educational standpoint. It did also bring about some decrease in consumption, in spite of the fact of the failure of the potato crop, which made it extremely difficult to lessen the consumption of cereals, and all the more so that the shortage came at a time when fruit and green vegetables were scarce and dear. Further, the fact that for the first time in their lives many working-class people earned wages which enabled them to buy as much food as they desired, did not tend to lower consumption, though in the end the enjoyment of more and better food by those who most needed it doubtless proved the truest form of economy.

The unsympathetic attitude of some well-to-do

people for these "newly rich" was marked and mischievous. It was, of course, brought about by ignorance, but was none the less harmful. I well remember talking with a woman whose family income had then risen to some £7 or £8 a week. "And those that have always had all, and more, grudge it to us," she remarked bitterly. "There've been weeks when it's been bread and tea, bread and tea, and slave, slave, slave from morning to night. An' now they say, 'Fancy people like that with £8 a week!' The people I lived with in service when I was a girl wouldn't have thought themselves rich on £8 a week!"

Approached in a fair and sympathetic spirit, working people showed themselves no less ready to make sacrifice for the sake of their country than any other persons, and that in spite of the fact that the economies asked of them, both of food and money, often entailed sacrifice, and not, as in the case of richer people, merely a little inconvenience.

The Voluntary Economy campaign also did good in that it made the general public realise how appalling was the waste permitted in most households, and, further, it was the means of educating the people in the use and preparation of available foodstuffs. Many a woman has to thank the Food Economy campaign speakers and demonstrators for knowledge which enabled her to feed her family sufficiently and wholesomely on foods of the



existence and methods of preparation of which she had hitherto been unaware. And lastly, the work of the Economy speakers was of value as general propaganda, for at that time there were (and still are) many people utterly ignorant of the reasons why a war fought in a foreign country should influence life in England. The people needed mental guidance and practical assistance; they needed to realise that each man, woman, and child had a part to play in the fight for Life and Liberty.

I believe that Lord Devonport felt somewhat hampered by Civil Service routine, which if sure is certainly apt to be unimaginative and slow. It was said that not only the Minister, but also some of the business men whom he gathered round him, found it difficult to suit their pace to that of the official machine, and being accustomed to come to decisions and to act on their own responsibility, did not take kindly to working under the control of highly placed Civil servants.

I have also heard it said that Lord Devonport made a mistake in trying to do too much personally, that he had not the talent for deputing responsibility possessed by Lord Rhondda. It was said, too, that the First Controller sympathised more with the trader than the consumer. I do not know that this was true, but if so it must be remembered that Lord Devonport, without influence, without the power of wealth, worked his way to an im-



portant position, and in doing so gained a reverence for the great trades about the intricacies of which he knows so much. No man realises better what mental and physical toil goes to the building up of these great industries.

Without in any way detracting from the work of Lord Rhondda, one may be fair to Lord Devonport. The public did not realise, I think, that much of the foundation of the work completed in Lord Rhondda's day had been laid during the rule of his predecessor—a statement which Lord Rhondda himself made on several occasions.

I was away on a speaking tour when Lord Devonport came to wish us good-bye before his departure for his Welsh home, but he wrote me the following kind letter. A student of caligraphy would find Lord Devonport's writing interesting—it is singularly expressive of the man :—

“ DEAR MRS. PEEL,

My warmest thanks for your very kind letter. I am sorry to have missed you, as I desired to thank you in person for all the splendid work which you and Mrs. Pember Reeves have put forth on behalf of the Ministry of Food.

I have often wondered how you could stand the strain of the long journeyings, followed by the strain of the meetings. But the War has taught us that the women are wonderful ! Is it not so ? I don't suppose any Minister ever had such loyal

support from a Staff such as I have had. Although the work and responsibility have been heavy, I always had that satisfaction.

I am glad indeed to be free from it all (the work) with its worries, and able to take a real rest, which is what I so much need. This place is 1750 feet above sea-level and commands views of mountains, moorlands, and the distant sea. The air is of champagne quality, and I fancy I shall soon forget even 'profiteering.'

I am sure you will find Lord Rhondda sympathetic and kind. He is one of my oldest Parliamentary friends, and his wife is charming.

Some day I hope to see you again. Meanwhile my reiterated thanks for all your valuable help and loyal support.

Yours sincerely,

DEVONPORT."

As I read this letter I smile to think of the writer's criticism of the public's attitude towards him. "It's all very well for the man who is not holding the dog to stand by and tell you how you *ought* to hold him, but I was the man who *was* holding the dog, and a nasty beast he was, I assure you," a statement with which every one, I think, will agree.

## CHAPTER III

### MEETINGS

At the Coronet Theatre—Albert Hall meetings—Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Bonar Law, Mr. Prothero, Mr. Barnes, Mrs. Tennant and Miss Violet Markham speak—Meetings in Kensington—At Newcastle—"Tell the same lie"—At Derby—At Coventry—The Silvertown explosion—At Portsmouth—Pet dogs—Prohibition—The disappearing rabbit—Women in munition works—Pies and potatoes—Odd ailments—The old lady's trousers—Respected funerals—Industrial conditions in the early part of the nineteenth century—Child labour—Human life and material wealth.

**D**URING my year's work at the Food Ministry, I spent a great part of my time either going to meetings, speaking at meetings, listening to other people speak at meetings, and coming back from meetings. Some towns I visited twice, and at most of them I spoke two or three times in different halls, schools, cinemas, canteens, and factories. I also spoke at quantities of London and suburban meetings, amongst others that of the Ladies' Grand Council of the Primrose League, Caxton Hall, at which Miss Balfour, who so much resembles her famous brother, Mr. Arthur Balfour, presided, and Mr. Ormesby Gore made a very good speech on National Reconstruction.

Another interesting meeting was that which took place at the Coronet Theatre, Notting Hill. Mr. Herbert Samuel was the star performer and Miss Chamberlain took the chair.<sup>1</sup> Miss Chamberlain had a wonderful voice, and I think could be heard with the greatest ease in the further recesses of the Albert Hall, which, I believe, is a very difficult place in which to speak owing to a tiresome echo.

Talking of the Albert Hall, I attended the great National Service meeting there. Mr. Chamberlain, the predecessor of Sir Auckland Geddes, was in the chair, and Mrs. Tennant and Miss Violet Markham, who were then directors in that Ministry, made excellent speeches. Mr. Prothero and Mr. Barnes also addressed the audience.

It was one of the very few meetings which the Queen has ever attended. The Albert Hall was crowded with women workers, and Mr. Prothero made a great appeal for women to work on the land, though, as he truthfully told them, such work is not of the "lilac sunbonnet" order, but very hard and sometimes disagreeable labour.

The hall became almost unbearably hot; I was not feeling well, and was afraid that I should faint. As Mrs. Asquith in a pause between the speeches left the platform, I thought I might follow her

<sup>1</sup> Miss Chamberlain died much regretted in the early winter of 1918.



example, and just as my hind leg was disappearing down the staircase I heard Mr. Barnes rebuking the audience for quitting their places before the Queen had left the hall.

Another Albert Hall meeting which I attended was that of the National War Savings Committee. Sir Robert Kindersley was in the chair, and all sorts of famous persons upon the platform. Mrs. Pember Reeves, who is a member of the War Savings Council, was unable to attend (I rather think she was speaking at Manchester on that occasion), and I was allowed to use her ticket and give my own to a friend. I sat just behind the first row of celebrities and was very interested in studying Mr. Lloyd George. He gave me the impression of being tired of needing to nerve himself for the exertion of addressing a huge audience ; but soon his subject possessed him, and he spoke eloquently with a happy choice of words and phrase. " Even if we do all we can, we shall never be able to requite our men for their agony—if we do less than all we shall dishonour their sacrifices. . . ." " Be the comrades of your soldiers," he implored ; " the nation can bear her burden if she will." As he spoke his voice became stronger, his manner more dramatic. Only twice in a long speech did he refer to any notes. " Put forth your energies and your self-control. . . ." " Waiting means winning. . . ." " If pacifists meant men who desire an enduring



peace then I indeed would be a pacifist. . . .” “This must be the end ; our children must not be condemned to the horrors and terrors which the most vivid imagination dare not portray.” As he said these words Mr. George’s voice shook. I can see his face—the face of the man who has imagination. I think that he no longer saw those rows of people sitting there in safety, he saw instead the battlefields of France.

Mr. Bonar Law can also make a happy choice of words. “If this nation will not cut down its expenditure, the sparse supply of commodities becomes more sparse. Prices must rise, wages must rise, and prices rise again. You create a vicious circle. . . .” “Artificial prosperity leads to extravagance. The prosperity of peace comes from the creation of wealth ; that of war from the dissipation of wealth ; from destruction ; from death.” He spoke of the peace which Germany desires : “A peace which is a prelude to a new and more devastating war—peace which, in truth, is but an arming truce.”

The Chancellor of the Exchequer’s style of speaking is far more restrained than that of Mr. Lloyd George, and I noticed that he was evidently more accustomed to address men than a mixed audience. Time after time he began “Gentlemen,” corrected himself and substituted, “Ladies and Gentlemen.”

Mr. Bonar Law looks as if he might be a lawyer, and Mr. Lloyd George looks as if he might be a poet, and both speak as you would expect them to speak.

General Smuts made a short speech and received an ovation. He has a neatly trimmed pointed beard, and to my mind quite a marked resemblance to King George.

Amongst other people present on that occasion were Mr. Winston Churchill, Lord Rhondda and Mrs. Asquith, who sat near me, and was, as usual, well dressed, wearing that day a very neat black tailor-made and an extremely smart yet simple hat.

It was soon after the meeting at the Albert Hall that Sir Robert Kindersley asked me to one of his weekly War Savings war dinners at Simpson's. These dinners were really war dinners consisting of two courses. Amongst the guests were Mr. Kennedy Jones, Sir Theodore Chambers, Mr. Bottomley (not Horatio!), Mr. Hartley Withers, several others (who they were I have forgotten), Mrs. Reeves and myself.

Sir Robert is a very tall largely built man with a charming manner and that engaging habit of always appearing pleased to see one.

Kensington was the scene of some excellent meetings. I spoke in Kensington Town Hall, which is not an easy room in which to talk, as if the windows are opened it is noisy and if they are shut it is hot.

Sir Robert Davison, the Mayor of that Royal borough, and a very fine figure of a man, took the chair. The audience filled two rooms, and I talked to one while Mrs. Reeves talked to the other. We then changed over, which agitated me, as I had no idea what she had said, and naturally did not want to say it all over again.

It was at another meeting at the same place that a lady when leaving the hall slipped on the marble staircase, fell and cut her head very badly. A doctor could not be found for quite a long time, and I had to do what I could in the matter of washing and bandaging her wounds.

One of my most interesting meetings was at Newcastle-on-Tyne. The Lord Mayor, Sir Robert Dunn, was kind enough to ask me to stay at the Mansion House, but as I could only arrive very late at night, and was obliged to leave very early in the morning two days later, I thought that it would be less troublesome if I stayed at an hotel. Following my usual practice I opened my window wide and lay listening to children playing out in the streets. Until long after midnight they were out of doors. Soon after that various scientists drew attention to the fact that such curtailed sleeping-time is extremely bad for children, and amongst the news which we received from Germany, we noted that parents were advised to put their children to bed as early as 4 or 5 o'clock in the

afternoon, and to keep them in bed until 10 or 11 next day, in order to mitigate the effects of a reduced diet.

Sir Robert Dunn entertained me at high tea at the Mansion House, and took the chair at the subsequent meeting.

At that time people were greatly annoyed because they declared that the Ministry of Food issued so many and such contradictory orders. It did, and I had to read them. Still, often it was difficult to avoid these contradictions. After all, a War Cabinet cannot consist entirely of thoroughly trustworthy prophets, and such matters as good or bad harvests, the number of ships sunk by submarines (and at that time our danger from the submarine menace was far greater than was generally known); the Russian collapse; the results of the Salonika and Dardanelles campaigns, and the demands of France and Italy could not be foretold, all of which made the task of housekeeping for the nation an exceedingly difficult one, necessitating frequent changes in food policy.

Sir John Dunn, however, was not pleased with the Ministry of Food on that occasion, and at the end of his speech from the chair, in which he pointed out that all this chopping and changing and issuing of orders was enough to drive a man mad, he turned to me: "and what I say is, Mrs. Peel, you go back to that Government of yours and tell 'em that if



they *must* lie, for God's sake let 'em all arrange to tell the same lie!" and quite obediently I transmitted this message to Sir Henry Rew, who seemed pleased with it. North-country audiences delight me, and I thoroughly enjoyed the good-tempered heckling which I received at Newcastle. Finally, after I had made every one laugh heartily all went well. I remember that Mr. Gratton Doyle, who later on became a Ministry of Food official, spoke at this meeting.

The next day I spent in some of the Tyneside workshops. My younger sister was then acting as Welfare Worker in a munitions shop—a shop being a vast shed with a glass roof, in which the noise of machinery is such that one has to scream at the top of one's voice if one would carry on a conversation. Here I was asked to meet some of the men workers, the only convenient time and place being the dinner-hour in a public-house on the other side of the road from the shops, which extend for miles along the river-side. I have spoken in many munition works and factories, north, south, east, and west, and wherever I went, I tried to gain some idea of the work that was done in them and of the life of the workers. Now I have only to shut my eyes and see pictures of dreary streets, tall chimneys and many-windowed factory buildings, full of men and women and machinery. It is a tragedy that so much energy, human and mechanical, intelligence



and wealth should exist for one purpose—to manufacture material which will bring to humanity death, destruction, terror and agony untold.

When I went to speak at Derby the Mayoress, Mrs. Bonas, and her daughter, Irene, were very kind to me. The meeting took place in a fine new building, of which the town must be proud, and after tea Miss Bonas took me to see her father's tape mills. At these mills the red tape so beloved in Government departments was manufactured, also white tape, which in its early stages is yellow and then becomes pale blue and ultimately white. Finally, it is cut into lengths and packed in the neat packets in which we are accustomed to buy it.

The machinery by which tape is made seems to be endowed with almost human intelligence—more, perhaps, than is possessed by some of those who use so much of the red variety.

I have a hazy idea that the history of tape-making is not known; certainly a trade mark or device is used of which no one knows the origin or meaning.

I was much distressed some time after my visit to Derby to read in the paper that Mr. Bonas' mills had been burnt down, the damage being estimated at £20,000, and 150 hands thrown out of work.

Derby is the headquarters of the Midland Railway, and in their storehouses and workshops, engine and carriage factory, they employed before

the War upwards of ten thousand men. Derby is particularly favourable for manufactures requiring water-power, and is famous for its production of silk elastic, lace, cotton, and paper, and, of course, for Crown Derby china. Clothing for the Army, police, and railway servants is also made there.

I left Derby by the evening train, which had a restaurant car, in which I expected to eat my dinner, but found that by the time I boarded it all the food had been consumed. But friends appear in need, and I suddenly heard a voice remarking to the car waiter: "You really had better get that lady some food; she is a Food Controller, and if you don't Heaven knows what she will do to you"; the result of this extremely incorrect statement being that the waiter reluctantly produced coffee, biscuits, butter, and cheese.

Another interesting visit was that which I paid to Coventry. Labour conditions were very unsettled at that time—there were great difficulties about the food supply, and ultimately the munition workers came out on strike. I visited several of the housing colonies and canteens. The Government housing colony of huts for women workers were very comfortable, with bathrooms, cosy little bedrooms, and a good canteen and common room where concerts and entertainments were often held.

As long ago as 1463 the making of caps and

bonnets was extensively carried on at Coventry, as it is spelled in Domesday Book, and the place was then famous for a particular kind of dye whence came the saying, "True as Coventry Blue." The manufacture of ribbons was introduced about the beginning of the sixteenth century, and in the seventeenth century that of watches, while later on Coventry became renowned for its bicycles and motor-car factories, most of which have now become munition factories.

I spoke in several of the canteens in these works. In one of the very few which were for men and women alike there was a special table for a few quite old men who had been employees of the firm in the days when it had been a watchmaking factory. These old dears were rather put about because they could not have the food to which they had always been accustomed. The lady who ran the canteen was extremely kind to them, permitted them to be waited on and generally pampered them, having their food specially minced for them.

Speaking in canteens, which are generally very ill-adapted for that purpose, with all the noise of the kitchen service going on, was extremely wearying work, especially as one had to try to present what perforce was a large subject in a few words. Outdoor speaking in munition works during the dinner-hour is not easy either. I remember going down to Silvertown to speak in a factory yard just

outside which was the railway, and really I wondered that by the end of a ten minutes' speech I had not lost my voice once and for all. This was the factory of Messrs. Keiller of marmalade fame. Here a great amount of jam was being tinned for the Army, and I stood for some time watching a girl making jam-tin lids. The machine which she controlled was quite uncannily clever, yet why such work should appeal to any young woman I fail to understand. The hours are long, the work is monotonous and very noisy ; but although it is monotonous it needs the continual attention of the operator. Yet girls prefer to take up such work as this rather than to become domestic servants. Why ? It is time that would-be employers of domestic labour found the answer to that question.

It was just after the visit to Silvertown that the great explosion at the Brunner Mond factory occurred. I was sitting at home in the drawing-room writing, the members of my family were out—my husband on police duty, and some festivity had occurred which had caused me to tell the servants that I would keep house alone. Suddenly there came a very loud bang and the windows shook as if they would fall in. “ A bomb ! ” said I to myself. “ I should think in Fulham Road : I think I'll go and sit on the kitchen stairs.” I was really rather frightened, but my husband has trained me so well



in the matter of economy in electric light that I am proud to say that alarmed as I was I paused to turn off all the lights before retiring to the basement. Catalina the cat, who thought it very nice of me to visit her, and I sat there together for a time, and then as nothing more happened we emerged. Shortly after that my husband returned. He had been in Princes Gardens, and said that the whole sky was lit up, and that a man near him suddenly fell flat on his face, whether from the force of the explosion or merely from fright he did not know. Quite a large number of windows in this part of London were broken, so that the force of the explosion must have been considerable even in this distant locality.

Another meeting which I specially remember was at the Town Hall, Portsmouth. It had been proposed to hold the gathering in one of the smaller rooms, but the audience arrived in such numbers that they had to be conducted to the large hall. The Mayor was rather distressed at this, fearing that I should not be able to make myself heard in so large a room. As a matter of fact it is an admirable room in which to speak and one does not need to exert one's voice in the least.

A great number of pacifists attended and bobbed up and down, peppering me with questions. One woman was very bitter on the subject of prices. "These high prices," she declared, "are all the



result of control," and having complained that high prices were the result of control, went on to demand that the Government should at once fix prices in order to suit the pockets of the very poor. When asked how she would persuade all the markets of the world to supply us with as much food as we required, at any price which we chose to offer, she said that she had not come there to talk about that.

Pet dogs, horse-racing, total prohibition, the disappearing rabbit, queues, war bread, the shortage of potatoes and of sugar, the horrible greed of the rich and the sufferings of the poor, who starved because the rich ate up all the food, were matters which had to be discussed at these meetings. Fortunately, however, they did not all have to be discussed at the same meeting, because there was always one subject especially in fashion at the moment.

At one time, wherever I went every one talked of pet dogs. **D O G**—this little word of three letters roused people to passionate eloquence. Some there were who cried that the dog was the friend of man, and the best friend he ever had had or would have, and that almost anybody or anything ought to starve before the dog, while others spoke bitterly of the pampered pet fed on sweetbread and cream. Much as I love all animals, I do think that there are too many pet dogs—often so

kept that they are a nuisance to themselves and to all around them.

The disappearing rabbit became a perfect nightmare to me, and I think Lord Rhondda ought to have been very grateful to me for bearing so many of the scoldings which should have fallen to his lot, for it was he who caused the rabbit to disappear—not I.

One of the best cartoons which ever appeared in *Punch* was that in which Lord Rhondda as a conjurer performed the disappearing rabbit trick.

Every one complained furiously of the high price of rabbits, yet they were bitterly indignant when the price was controlled, and in consequence the rabbit disappeared from the market. "Where *are* the rabbits?" cried my audiences, the truth being that when people could no longer obtain a high price for them they found it paid better to eat them themselves or dispose of them locally than to sell them to dealers.

Feeling ran so high about prohibition that I was occasionally obliged to refuse to discuss the matter, not because I was unsympathetic, but because it was not a question with which it was my duty to deal. I often suggested that if the inhabitants of that particular town so strongly desired total prohibition they should call a special meeting and express their opinion in no uncertain words to their

member of Parliament. At one meeting, chiefly composed of working-men, I suggested this course. " 'E ain't no good," said some one. " Well," I retorted pertly, " you put him there. I didn't—I haven't a vote," a remark which met with much applause. I am glad to think that I can no longer make such a statement.

Had the country as a whole demanded prohibition I presume that it would have attained it. There was and is undoubtedly a strong feeling, especially amongst women, in favour of prohibition, and it will be interesting to see what effect Women's Votes have in future legislation dealing with the drink problem.

Visiting as I did factories in all parts of the country I saw something of the conditions of industrial life, and was specially interested in talking to women workers and to the supervisors with whom I came in contact.

So bad were conditions in munition works in the first months of war that they could not be tolerated, and Mr. Lloyd George, then Minister of Munitions, decided that prompt measures must be taken to better them. " The workers of to-day are the mothers of to-morrow . . . the women of Britain are required to save Britain : it is for Britain to protect them," he said. A departmental Committee was appointed, and on their recommendation a Welfare and Health Department established. A

panel of trained candidates for welfare posts was afterwards created, these officers after engagement becoming responsible to their employers and not to the Ministry.

Girls of fourteen are taken for ordinary factory work, but "young persons" of under eighteen are not permitted to do night work. Hours differ in various factories. In some the shifts are nominally twelve hours ; in others three shifts of eight hours each are worked. In one great munitions works which I visited the girls came in at 7 o'clock in the morning and were supposed to work until 7 o'clock that evening, but in order to prevent them from leaving the works at the same hour as the men, and the consequent overcrowding of trams, they went out at 6.30 o'clock.

Beginning work at 7 o'clock, ten minutes was granted at 8 o'clock for a cup of tea. As a matter of fact the girls almost always managed to spin this ten minutes into twenty, and they were absurdly fastidious about the tea, which was excellent ; but, of course, as the management gave it it was regarded with grave suspicion. In any case, however, many of the girls preferred to bring cocoa, or Oxo, or Bovril, as they had already had tea before coming to work.

After this break, work went on until 12 o'clock, when there was an hour for dinner. I have an idea that the law forbids the eating of dinner in the



shops ; but at all events many of the girls certainly did eat their dinners there, just wiping their greasy hands with a greasy rag and eating their food under the most undesirable conditions.

Some of the supervisors to whom I have talked told me that they consider that it would be for the benefit of the workers if stricter discipline was observed in the shops, and that the men and girls should never be allowed to stay in them during the dinner-hour.

On one occasion a supervisor told me that she found one of her girls and a male fitter eating their dinner and hugging each other affectionately in the intervals of so doing, so she suggested as tactfully as she could that this was scarcely the time and place for such a display of affection. The girl looked up at her with a sweet smile, hugged her fitter a little closer, and remarked with charming frankness : " But a' loikes it." The fitter, however, was more modest, looked sheepish, and departed.

From 1 o'clock work went on until 4 or 4.30, and then came half an hour for tea. After tea until 6.30 the hands were tired and became slack, and very little work was done.

At night the girls came in at 6.30 or 7, working till 10 or 11 o'clock, when they had an hour off for supper. Their tea-time came some hours later, and at 4 o'clock in the morning a cup of tea was provided by the firm. Here again supervisors have



often told me that after the 4 o'clock tea very little real work was done, and one can scarcely wonder at it.

When women first began to flock into munition works in many places there were no canteens and no arrangements for the girls to heat the food they brought with them, and the general conditions under which they worked were bad. Lodgings were difficult to obtain, and perhaps six girls would sleep at night in one room and six others in the same room during the day, so that beds were never properly aired or the rooms cleaned. Later hostels were built and canteens started, but still a large number of girls preferred to bring their own food, and so arrangements were made for the reheating of it.

Up in the North pies made in saucers and baked potatoes were the favourite meal by night and by day, and when there was any idea that a girl had not got her own pie she always showed the deepest suspicion of what might be in the other girl's pie. Eyes would flash and hands would clench, tempers would rise, and many were the complaints to supervisor: "She's taken my pie. I'm not going to eat her pie—I don't know what's in her pie!"

They also preferred their own potatoes, and a favourite method of marking the potato was to stick a hatpin into it.

Although the firm supplied it, many girls brought

their own tea, and more quarrels took place because the girls accused each other of "nicking" each other's "pots" of tea—"pots" being the local term for mugs, most of which were of identical pattern.

In all munition factories there was a great mingling of classes, and certainly in many places some of the girls were of a very rough type. London girls used to complain that they never heard such language as the people used "up North," though I fancy some of the young ladies in Wales were quite as accomplished in this respect as their sisters in the North. Often this use of bad language was nothing but a habit and meant no more than when girls of more refinement say "bother" and "dash" and "hang."

A "super" told me that one day she was in the girls' cloakroom and a man on some steps was mending the electric lights. A girl came in, and not seeing the "Lady Sympathiser," as she was sometimes called, smiled prettily at the electrician, but addressed him in words which were anything but pretty. Later "super" said to her: "Maggie, how could you talk like that?" Maggie smiled: "Oh well," she said, "I didn't see you were there." "That's not the point. The point is that it ought to be beneath your own dignity to use such bad language." "I never use bad language," replied Maggie furiously, and then, for she was fond of her

super, her fury died down and she began to cry. "I *never* use bad language," she sobbed. "I wouldn't do it. That was only swearing!" The difference between swearing and "bad language" being that swearing was "just swearing," while bad language was what she described as "filthy talk."

It is strange that the advance of education has not done more to purify the talk of these girls, who nevertheless have of course their own standards of decency. Still, in spite of improved educational opportunities, it is not uncommon to find young married women and even young girls unable to write, and not rare to discover that neither can they read—or at all events so little as to be practically useless to them. They leave school so early that by the time they are seventeen or eighteen many of them have forgotten how to read and write.

The girls show a horror of being put upon, and their suspicion of any innovation is shown by the following incident: a certain supervisor obtained a new cloakroom for the use of the girls, and had some seats put there. Some of the girls came to her in a furious state: "Have we got to go and sit in that cloakroom?" they asked. "Those seats—have we got to use them?" "Certainly not, unless you like," said the supervisor. "Then, what are they there for?" "Well, you know," said super-

visor, "you most of you change your boots when you come to work. I thought it would be much more comfortable for you if you could sit down while you were buttoning or lacing them up." "Oh well, if it's only that," they said, and calmed down, and later on wrangled with each other for the privilege of using the seats.

It is very necessary to know the meaning of the words used, otherwise supervisor and worker are apt to misunderstand each other completely. For instance, in some places to say that a girl is "ignorant" means that she does not "know her manners"—does not know how to behave, not that she is ignorant from the point of view of book learning.

In the North if a supervisor remonstrated with a girl or had any quite gently worded complaint to make to her, that was "chastising." One girl who was spoken to about some quite trivial matter replied: "Yes, you were perfectly right to chastise me about that."

In London and South-country places to be a woman of "good principle" has a special meaning. Speaking of a woman who had behaved very badly, a supervisor said she was a person of bad principles. Another woman said: "No, whatever she was, she wasn't that; she always paid her rent regular."

In the North the girls had some very quaint expressions: "How are you to-day, Jinny?"



“The doctor says I’m suffering from a proper perishment of cold!” At another time the reply to a similar query would be—“Oh, super, I’m not feeling at all clever to-day.”

A disease from which many of the girls declared they suffered was what they called “brass on the stomach,” but what this disease was the supervisor who told me of it was quite unable to discover.

In spite of the ailments from which the women workers suffered they had an extraordinary amount of energy both for work and for play, and it was no uncommon thing to dance practically all night and work all day. Of dancing they were passionately fond. On one occasion they arranged with the supervisor that she should take a certain hall for them which had a particularly good floor. The owners would not provide refreshments for less than five shillings a head and would not permit the girls to provide their own, so after a hard day’s work they danced from 7 to 11 p.m. without anything but a drink of water.

The girls were very fond of giving parties for wounded soldiers, and often duplicate tickets were issued so that every soldier should find a lady allotted to him. Sorting out the partners was a great interest. Sometimes undoubtedly tickets were mysteriously shuffled. Two very plain and elderly women complained piteously to my sister



that they could not find their soldiers, but ultimately returned in triumph, each with a small and shy youth in tow.

Another favourite entertainment was having their photographs taken in groups. One girl wished to have her fitter standing near her, but the fitter turned a deaf ear to her blandishments, at which she addressed him in terms more vigorous than elegant: "*Annie*," said supervisor—"Oh, *Annie*, *please*!" "Well," replied *Annie*, quite cheerfully, "he wouldn't come, he wouldn't, the ——!!!"

At the time at which I am writing the girls in these particular works earned anything from 25s. to £5 a week. They spent a considerable amount on food, and needed it. They also spent lavishly on their clothes, and very well dressed many of them were, in well-cut tailor-mades of carefully chosen colours, with hat and blouse, gloves and stockings all to match, and particularly neat boots and shoes, and not only did they spend on their outer clothes but their under clothes were in the best of taste. Naturally there were exceptions—some of the girls were dirty and loaded themselves with tawdry finery; but undoubtedly if munition girls spent more than perhaps it was wise that they should spend on clothes their standard of taste and of cleanliness was becoming noticeably higher.

The girls and the young married women and even the middle-aged women greatly feared any ridicule

from the men. They refused to wear the goggles supplied them for certain work because the "fellers laughed at them." There was also at first much fuss about wearing caps—the girls hated to hide their hair and several horrible accidents occurred in consequence.

It took some time to popularise trousers, which were very necessary for some kinds of work ; and here again the reason was that the "fellers would laugh," while some of the older women considered trousers indecent for women. An elderly woman who had worked a long time in one firm utterly refused to don the trousered and overalled uniform, and as she was such an old employee she was allowed to continue to work in her skirt and blouse. Much to the surprise of the supervisor on the day when the King visited that town and there was a parade of munition workers the good lady appeared spick and span in trousered uniform. "Why, Mrs. Dash !" said the supervisor, "you've got your trousers on." "Yes," said Mrs. Dash severely, "I'm a loyal woman, I am ; I put 'em on to please the King, but I'll take 'em off again to-morrer !"

Until it became the habit for the women to work in uniform accidents happened owing to their hair or skirts being caught in the machinery. Even under the best management accidents occurred ; sometimes it was impossible to prevent these, and

at other times they occurred because the girls would not attend to the rules framed to ensure their own safety. Generally they were very plucky when hurt, and I myself saw a girl who had had a finger cut off walk calmly to the ambulance room holding the finger in position.

At first the supervisors were regarded with suspicion ; they were supposed to be the spies of the employers, but after a time the girls realised that a good welfare worker was of great assistance to them and would come to the "super" in all their troubles.

One "super" told me that she discussed with some of the hands whether or not welfare work should be encouraged. The opinion was that it should, and in response to further questions girls said they liked to have "real ladies" in this position, and one added : "A lady that will hear everything and say nothing."

Some very sad cases come before the supervisors. Bridget, an Irish girl with no friends, died in a sanatorium in which the supervisor had obtained a bed for her. The other girls who had worked in her shop subscribed to give her a "good funeral." Funerals are important functions—a person who has a good funeral being referred to as "much respected." The supervisor, who was anxious to do everything as it should be done, consulted her landlady, who said that it was not necessary to

have coaches as a girl could be as much respected if she had a walking funeral, and so poor Bridget, although she went to the cemetery coachless, was at all events "much respected," and her work-fellows spent their hardly earned money in wreaths and crosses with which to cover her grave.

But although conditions in industrial life are by no means ideal, it is cheering to realise how much they have been improved since the days when we were fighting that other great war which terminated with the Battle of Waterloo.

During and for some time after the Napoleonic wars work was scarce, wages low, the hours of labour long. The wages of mechanics and artisans ranged from 18s. to 25s. a week. Where Trade Unions existed they were secret societies. The hours of labour averaged ten hours per day for artisans and mechanics, in other industries twelve to fourteen hours per day, or longer, and payment was not made for overtime which was exacted. Means of transit were few and bad, and therefore the fatigue of the workman was added to by a long walk to and from the place of employment, and in order to play into the hands of the publican wages were often paid late on Saturday night in public-houses.

Large numbers of women and children were employed in industrial work, often under shocking conditions. Prior to 1801 workhouse children were



“apprenticed” to factory owners—practically these children became slaves without wages, badly fed and clothed, sleeping in sheds and cellars, and working sixteen hours a day. An Act passed in 1801 did something to lessen the child’s load of misery. Some of my readers may not know that the fountain at Piccadilly Circus is a memorial to that Earl of Shaftesbury who devoted so much of his life to the rescue of factory child slaves. The “sight was most piteous,” he once said, after seeing a great gathering of these children, “sad, dejected, cadaverous, the deformation incredible. They seemed to me like a mass of crooked alphabets.”

Reforms come slowly, but they come, and with the growth of education and the greater sympathy and knowledge which a wider outlook brings they will continue to come more speedily.

After all I have seen of the industrial life of this country, for I knew something of the lives of factory workers before ever I became a Government official, it is not wonderful, perhaps, that my sympathies go out towards the wage earners. I do not wonder that they have come to demand shorter hours, better conditions of labour, better conditions of life in general, and I should be glad to think it possible that I might live to see an eight-hour day for men and women alike, together with the abolition of manufacturing towns, with their long and gloomy rows of hideous little houses, with never a



tree or open space in sight and over all a pall of smoke.

We have held human life and happiness cheap and material wealth dear. Are we at last coming to make a truer estimate of the value of the man and of the thing he makes ?

## CHAPTER IV

### MORE MEETINGS

A sailor and a chicken leg—My friend Mrs. Peel and the rice pudding—At Liverpool—Margate, Broadstairs, Deal and other seaside towns—"Waacs"—At Sheffield—The value of money—At Bath, Hereford, Canterbury, Swansea and Leamington—Potatoes and peel—The well-fed looking lady—Various well-known people—The Downing Street scullery—Telephone Exchange meetings—Grosvenor House conferences—St. Columba's: "Will ye no come back agen?"—The Mansion House.

WHEN travelling about the country on these speaking tours (and naturally, in order to save time and money, whenever possible I spoke at points which were near together) various incidents, annoying or amusing, occurred.

One afternoon I had to address a meeting arranged by Lady Ferrers in Battersea, and from there proceeded with all speed to catch a train for Liverpool. My husband, who whenever he could possibly spare time from his own rather overwhelming work, saw me off, had kept a seat for me and obtained a dinner-basket, for on very few trains did one then find a restaurant car. Two or three seconds before the train started a naval lieutenant

precipitated himself into the carriage, calling guards and porters to get him a dinner-basket, but not one was to be had. About an hour later our train broke down and we were held up for some two or three hours until another engine could be procured. My travelling companion fussed and fretted at the delay, and so miserable did he appear to be at the idea of not reaching Liverpool at the time fixed that I ventured to ask him what dire consequences would befall should he arrive there a few hours later, or even not until the next morning.

“ Well, it wouldn’t really matter much, I suppose,” he admitted ; so I suggested that he should cease from troubling, and, as he could not obtain a dinner-basket for himself, share mine. I didn’t in the least wish to share my dinner with him, for I was very hungry, and the *pièce de résistance*—a chicken leg—was extremely elegant and slim. While dining somewhat unsatisfyingly off this dainty a small and fossilised roll and a disheartened tomato, we came to the conclusion that we could probably catch a train at Crewe, which would get us to our destination that night ; but as we neared that station it became evident that it would be a toss-up whether or no we did catch the train. Judge then of my amaze when as we drew into the station that base young man flung open the door, snatched up the small case which ap-

peared to be all the luggage he possessed, hurled himself out of the carriage, and, as the French say, "running with all his legs," made a bee-line for the Liverpool train! Running is not one of my accomplishments, especially when encumbered by a heavy dressing-case, and I arrived panting on the platform to behold the Liverpool train dwindling in the distance. Surely I may be forgiven when I vow that never again will I share insufficient chicken-legs with strange young sailor-men.

It was late and dark, bitterly cold and raining fast as I made my way to the nearest hotel. There I found the night-porter drinking tea and eating bread and butter in the office. I asked him if he could procure some tea for me. He regretted that everything was locked up. Moved to pity by my cold and wearied appearance he offered to get another cup if I would not mind sharing his meal, and once again I realised that all men are not evil at heart. So we sat in the office and discussed Trade Unionism over our tea and bread and butter. That night porter was a charming and interesting old person and I much enjoyed my nocturnal tea-party.

An amusing experience occurred at a certain South-country meeting organised by the Mayoress. The local Member of Parliament had not interested himself very much in the affair, and at first professed himself unable to bestow the light of his

presence upon it. When, however, it appeared that the audience would be large and it was found necessary to engage the local cinema he discovered at the last moment that his engagements would permit him to say a few words. This was in the early days of the Food Economy campaign when Lord Devonport was Controller and many months before compulsory rations came into force. Of course I had come to ask the audience to make voluntary economy in food. My friend the Member greeted me with kindly condescension and then began his few words. He spoke for three-quarters of an hour, assured his audience that they would be on compulsory rations in a week or two's time, inferred that he enjoyed the innermost confidence of Lord Devonport, and summed up the situation by saying that this being the case he thought the food question would be settled without any necessity for voluntary effort on the part of anyone. "And now, ladies and gentlemen," he ended, "I am sure that our friend Mrs. Peel will be kind enough to give us a few nice recipes for rice pudding."

However, I got back a little of my own later, for when question time came the audience showed itself solid for prohibition. At this I at once became the Mrs. Peel whose only subject was rice pudding, and left the Member to deal with his prohibition party as best he might, which as he



owned a large interest in a local brewery put him in a difficult position.

I did find it so hard sometimes to remember that I was a woman and to "keep my place."

At another meeting the Member took not the smallest interest in the food question, but delivered an impassioned harangue on the shortcomings of the Foreign Office. "We will not forget," he cried, "we will not forget! When this war is over it will be your duty—your patriotic duty—to make your resentment felt." In the front row, gazing at him entranced, sat a remarkably stupid-looking woman with her mouth wide open and by her side a small boy afflicted with a violent squint and dressed in a velveteen suit, striped socks and a man-of-war cap. I pictured them to myself at the Foreign Office making their resentment felt.

At the time when potatoes were extremely plentiful and the Food Controller was anxious that they should be used largely in order to lessen the consumption of cereals, one Member, a dear old gentleman much beloved in his constituency, being somewhat muddled as to what it was that the Food Controller *did* wish us to eat and having slept peacefully through my little speech, rose and with tears in his eyes implored the audience to refrain from eating potatoes.

The only town to which Mrs. Pember Reeves and myself journeyed together was Liverpool, which

city took a leading part in the Food Economy campaign. The Lord Mayor, the Lady Mayoress, Sir Max and Lady Muspratt, asked us to lunch at the Mansion House, and kindly sent the Lord Mayor's carriage to fetch us and convey us back to the hotel. Imagine how proud and important we felt driving through the streets in such an equipage. But no—I do not believe Mrs. Reeves ever felt proud and important, though I frankly own that I did—whenever I could discover an opportunity of so doing.

The Lord Mayor made an excellent speech and presided at two meetings—one for mistresses and one for domestics.

The next day we did some sightseeing in the early part of the morning; then Mrs. Reeves departed for Crewe and some other towns on her homeward way, while I went on to Blundellsands, Southport, and Wrexham.

For the Wrexham meetings I stayed with Mrs. Fenwick. Sir Watkin Wynn, a very popular personage in those parts, was my chairman, and we held three meetings, one in a schoolroom, another out of doors, and the third in the cinema.

On another occasion I toured the towns of Margate, Broadstairs, Ashford, Canterbury, Deal, and Folkestone. The meeting at Margate was enormous and as I assured the Mayor afterwards, I should have liked to take him about with me as a

professional chairman, so admirable was his handling of the audience.

At Ashford I enjoyed myself greatly, for it did not often fall to my lot to have a meeting with a military band and a bouquet.

At Folkestone there was a very good meeting, before which Sir Stephen and Lady Penfold asked me to lunch. Not long ago I was at Folkestone again for a day or two, and found that charming place chiefly inhabited by "Waacs" and soldiers. The "Waacs" appeared to be the most well-behaved young women. Many a domestic-looking little party of wounded soldiers and "Waacs" did we see sitting out on the Leas, the "Waacs," for all their military-looking uniform, generally engaged in the truly feminine occupation of making crochet-lace. While I was there the Rest Camp on the Leas was empty, except on one occasion, when men were quartered there for a night and half a day. They whiled away these waiting hours by gazing out of the window, and every time a "Waac" passed by a duck-like chant of Waac, Waac, Waac, Waac ascended to heaven.

At Deal the weather was appalling and the streets in a terribly slippery condition. The meeting was further somewhat disorganised by a raid warning being given half an hour before it should have begun. I was staying for the night with Mr. and Mrs. Radcliffe, who lived near, and

we telephoned to know if the meeting would still take place. "Oh yes," was the answer, "some folk are sure to come." So off I started in a cab. Our progress was slow, as the horse could scarcely keep on its legs ; and presently we were brought to a standstill by a special constable, who rebuked us for not having put out our lamps. While the fly-man was arguing the point there was a great whirring and several enemy planes passed over. They did not, however, trouble themselves about Deal but went on to London.

One of my happiest recollections is of my visits to Sheffield, where I stayed with Mrs. Stephenson at Bannercross Hall. No one could have been kinder than she was to me, and I thoroughly enjoyed the time I spent in her charming house.

Miss Lilian Joy of the *Sheffield Telegraph* took a prominent part in the Economy campaign. It occurred to Miss Joy that it would be well to form a Committee of food experts to advise and educate the public, and she invited the co-operation of Miss Abbot of the *Sheffield Independent*, and this Committee was formed. Both ladies organised Food Economy shops ; that of the *Sheffield Telegraph* had a window in one of the great thoroughfares, and I stood outside it for some time one evening listening to the talk of people who stopped to look in. The conversation which I overheard made it evident how much need there was for



propaganda, and not only for propaganda but for practical instructions in food values and cookery. Not only in Sheffield but everywhere else that I went people simply could not understand that the possession of money did not guarantee them food. Time after time men and women have said to me of food : " I don't see why I should not have it if I can afford to pay for it." That there might come a day when money would not buy bread seemed to be beyond their comprehension. Discussing this question once, an old man said to me : " You tell 'em this story. It was in the Crimea, in the trenches. There was a man as 'ad some'ow got a bit of tobaccor, and an officer who 'ad none come along. ' Say, me man,' he says : ' I'll give you a sovereign for a bit of tobaccor.' But the man 'e says : ' Well, sir, a sovereign ain't no more use to me 'ere than it is to you, and I'd rather keep the tobaccor.' That'll show 'em as money ain't everything always."

Another story told to me by a nurse who had been in the retreat through Serbia served me well. A very rich woman, wearing hidden underneath her dress a beautiful pearl necklace, was amongst the refugees. On several occasions she offered pearls from this necklace and on one occasion the whole necklace in exchange for bread—to find that bread was of more value than pearls.

I went over several of the great munition works



at Sheffield and spoke in some canteens. In one of the works bayonets were being made. I should like to have spent days watching the different processes through which the steel passed, but all the time, of course, I could not but feel a heavy depression that the skill of man must be directed towards that which would cause death rather than towards the making of articles which should lend an added value to life.

The fatigue of the constant travelling and speaking was very great. Often I had to start early in the morning to catch trains at 8.30 or 9 o'clock. Taxis were unobtainable and I had to shoulder a suit-case and get to the various stations as best I could by tube, underground, or omnibus. Arriving back at the London termini late at night often between 11 and 12 neither porters nor cabs could be found. Whenever his own ever-increasing work made it possible for him to do so my husband came with me to the station and met me on my return. It was a sore trial to our tempers to see taxis drive up to the station with fares and drive away again utterly regardless of the blandishments of the distraught persons waiting there with luggage. I own that I sometimes felt that considering almost any hale and hearty young man engaged on Government work seemed able to enjoy the use of a car that one might have been spared for us.

The habit which the railway companies con-

tracted of altering the times of trains or taking them off at short notice added another horror to travelling. I arrived at St. Pancras one day to find that the train had been suddenly put on by ten minutes and that there was no other either from that or any other station which would get me to Sheffield in time for my meeting. I was, however, determined not to be done, so I took the next train to Doncaster and prevailed upon a firm who let out cars for hire to provide me with one.

There had been a blizzard and the roads were deep in snow, so I did not enjoy my twenty-mile drive, for every now and then the car side-slipped in the most inebricated fashion and I quite expected to end my days in the ditch. But I munched a War-cum-railway buffet bun, hoped for the best, and arrived at the Cutlers' Hall quite safely.

I visited Bath twice, spoke in the Assembly Rooms and bought a guide-book. Bath is a beautiful and most interesting old town to which the air raids have brought perhaps almost as great a popularity as it enjoyed in the eighteenth century. The guide-book tells me that its foundations were laid by the Romans, who drained the morass formed by the escaping springs, collected the latter and built over them baths of great beauty, of which some conception may be formed in the remains still so carefully preserved.

In 973 Edgar, the first King of all England, was

crowned in Bath Abbey in great state, and at the Norman Conquest the city was held by Edith, Edward the Confessor's queen. In 1574 Queen Elizabeth paid a visit to the city. Her favourite, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, stayed there for his health, and it is supposed that Shakespeare with a company of Players was a visitor at about the same time.

It was, however, in the eighteenth century that Bath became most famous under the rule of Beau Nash. Now, of course, Bath, like every other town, is given up to War work, and the Assembly Rooms, with their beautiful old cut-glass chandeliers, are the scene of serious meetings rather than gatherings of a social kind.

At Hereford and Canterbury, both cathedral towns, my platforms were conspicuous by the absence of dignitaries of the Church—indeed, when I come to think of it, the Church never made any great appearance at my food meetings. They left that duty to that hard-working band of unpaid curates—their wives.

Hereford is a picturesque old town, and it was interesting to me to visit it again, for as a little child I used to go there with my mother when she escorted my reluctant brother to his preparatory school. It was a place of importance even in Saxon times and the scene of an Ecclesiastical Synod held under Theodorus, Archbishop of Canterbury, and

I dare say little boys went reluctantly to school there even then.

In 1582 and 1592 when the Plague raged in London the Courts of Law were temporarily removed to Hereford, and why I don't quite know, but that fact interests me very much. I should love to have seen all the legal lights setting off, and I wonder if their wives went with them, and what a dreadful journey it must have been all the way from London to Hereford by coach. Heaven knows it took me long enough to get there in a War-time train.

I also bought a guide-book at Canterbury, to learn that in the old days it was called "Dafyr-raka." I feel quite glad that it is not called that now. Being captured by Hengist and the Angles, Frisians and Jutes it was named "Cantwarabyrig," which was worse than its first name. It was besieged and sacked by the Danes more than once, but for the last eight hundred years has suffered few vicissitudes, and it does not look as if it had. It wears a distinctly sleepy air.

The guide-books say that "The present importance of Canterbury is due in part to its position as the capital of East Kent, but chiefly to the greatness and endurance of its historical associations." But, of course, its real importance is that Americans like to visit it.

Considering that I had been brought up, so to



say, by the National War Savings Committee, I fear that I spent far too much money on guide-books that year. I bought still another at Exeter. It says : " The situation of the city is commanding and picturesque. It occupies a flat ridge on the north-eastern bank of the River Exe, eight miles from the English Channel, and from the hilly nature of the neighbourhood has a high reputation for salubrity. Although modern improvements have swept away the greater part of the old town, much still remains to interest the traveller or the antiquary." You would know even if I had not told you that this was what the guide-book said, because I could never hope to say anything in the least like it. It goes on to the effect that two mints were established at Exeter in the reign of Æthelstan which appear to have remained in existence till the time of Edward I, the earliest known coin minted there being a silver penny of Alfred, and the latest a penny of Edward I. A mint was also worked there by Charles I in 1644-5 during the Civil War, and because an ancestor of mine hid King Charles II in an oak tree I am always interested in the doings of the Stuarts.

Leamington was a place which I had never before visited, but which I hope to see again. Here again I yielded to temptation and bought another guide-book. In *Domesday* Leamington was known as " Lamintone," and later on called Leamington



Priors. The guide-book told me that, and some one (I forget who) told me that in 1730 the people used the saline water to make their bread, which was renowned for its excellence.

Another visit which I enjoyed was that which I paid to Swansea, for I had no previous knowledge of the large Welsh towns, though I had often stayed with people in the country parts of South and North Wales. I arrived at Swansea in the afternoon and spoke at the Town Hall and at three cinemas, returning to town early the next morning—after which I felt tired.

Major and Mrs. Harris showed me great kindness on that occasion and sped me on my homeward way with a lovely posy of orchids. I confess that I should have bought a guide-book in Swansea if there had been time, but I did learn that originally it was named “Caer Wyr” (the fortress of Gowerland), but the usual Welsh name is Abertawe. One can scarcely say that Swansea is a beautiful town, which is all the sadder because it is picturesquely situated on the margin of a bay at an angle between two high hills on the right bank of the river, and might, in spite of its docks and factories, be a lovely town.

After speaking we sometimes received amusing letters and sometimes verses. At the time of the potato shortage, when it was recommended that potatoes (when obtainable) should be cooked in

their jackets and eaten peel and all, I was cheered by the following poem :—

“MRS. PEEL RECOMMENDS US TO EAT PEEL.”

In ancient days the cannibal  
When hungry ate his trusty pal  
Or p'raps a steak off his best gal.

Tho' times have changed in many ways  
It's sad to say in present days  
This nasty habit with us stays.

This counsel by a worthy dame,  
Whose name is not unknown to fame,  
Has lately set the Press aflame.

When feeling that she wants a meal  
She can't heredity conceal,  
She eats potatoes and some Peel.

At meetings the speaker must be able to take personal chaff with good temper.

On one occasion, when I was addressing a Yorkshire audience, a man from the back of the hall called out to my chairman, “'Sither, laad—T' Government sends the Peel—happen we raather they'd send the potatoes !”

While it was at a South-country town that a large man arose, and in a sleepy good-humoured voice remarked :

“ But what I say is, they shouldn't send such a well-fed looking lady as you talking Food Economy ! ”

For a moment I felt daunted, for there is no getting away from it I do look well fed. (A newspaper reporter once described my twin and I as "Mrs. Reeves all nerves ; Mrs. Peel all curves !")

Then : " I don't agree," I remarked smilingly. " I think I'm just the right person to send, for if I can keep to the rations (and I give you my word of honour that I do) and look, as my friend there remarks, so well fed, I'm a vastly good advertisement for rations !" This tickled the crowd, and we parted on the most friendly terms.

During the summer of 1917 Sir Charles Stewart organised an Economy Exhibition, which was held in the unfinished palace of the London County Council, on the south side of Westminster Bridge. Lord Crewe, who was chairman of the London County Council, opened the exhibition, and Lady Crewe sat near him and wore a very pretty hat. We were, as a nation, he hinted, " tarred with the brush of the man who said he never spent 2s. 6d. where he could make a £1 do as well." Among the supporters of Lord Crewe on that occasion were the Japanese Ambassador, and Mr. Holman, Premier of New South Wales. Mr. Holman, I remember, described himself as a member of the sex which is the " victim of experiments in domestic economy," which sounded as if women didn't need to eat at all. Sir Francis Lloyd looking very elegant also made a good speech on that occasion. Mrs.

Schofield was the organising secretary—her task was one which would try the temper of a saint, I imagine, but I never saw her otherwise than calm and pleasant.

Mr. Kennedy Jones, then Director-General of Food Economy, asked me to organise a series of meetings at this exhibition, and it was arranged by Mrs. Douglas Vickers and myself that we would be responsible for the afternoon meetings on alternate days. Mrs. Rowland Prothero took the chair at a lecture given by Miss Meriel Talbot, of the Board of Agriculture, on "Women on the Land." In her speech from the chair Mrs. Prothero said that she thought that the coming of women of superior education on to the land might make a complete revolution in village life, eventually leading to a revival of country festivals and removing rural life out of its present terrible dullness. Mrs. Vickers also spoke of the dullness of country life, which pleased me, for coming of a very country-loving family I have often longed and seldom dared to suggest that cows and cabbages do pall upon some temperaments, though of course in these times of food shortage I should be deeply thankful to dwell in the company of either.

From Miss Meriel Talbot my mind wanders on to land girls. Although I am not yet an old woman I remember the day when village people in Hertfordshire threw stones at ladies who rode

bicycles, while the appearance of a female in bloomers excited every one to a frenzy of outraged propriety. Now one sees land girls in their breeches and smocks walking about in Piccadilly, and the only glances bestowed upon them are those of admiration for their neat appearance.

Undoubtedly the coming of the land girl and the increased wage of the agricultural labourer will have a great effect on village life; while if the rural housing reforms of which we hear so much are ever made, these causes combined and added to by the return of men from the War with ideas enlarged by their recent experiences, ought to do much to further the "back to the land" movement and create once more a Merrie England.

Mr. Pett Ridge, the well-known writer, spoke for the Ministry of Munitions on "The Youngster at War Work," and Mrs. Lloyd George took the chair for me when I spoke on the "Labour Saving House." Mrs. Lloyd George is small and prettily plump and has a nice little Welsh voice. I was born and brought up on the borders of Wales, and have spent some of my happiest times in that fair country—yes, indeed, and I love to hear the soft Welsh sing-song tones.

Mrs. Lloyd George told us of her housekeeping experiences. "When we went to 11 Downing Street nine years ago," she said, "we found a scullery there with not a window nor a gleam of



light or ventilation of any sort or kind. It took me some little time before I could persuade the Board of Works to build me a nice little scullery, but I didn't rest till I got it. Perhaps you would not believe me if I tell you that when Mr. and Mrs. Asquith came to Downing Street there was not a single bathroom in the house, and Mrs. Asquith was very loath to leave her beautiful house in Cavendish Square." Miss Balfour had also not been impressed with the joys of keeping house in the Prime Minister's abode, I believe.

There is no doubt that general interest is felt in the question of providing better houses, not only for the working, but for the middle classes, and judging from the discussion which afterwards followed and from the Press notices of this meeting, many people agree with me when I say that by making use of mechanical appliances and by building and furnishing houses in a somewhat different way, we could eliminate from one-third to a half of the hard and dirty domestic work which now must be performed in them.

Lady Londonderry was one of the speakers at these meetings. I took the chair for her when she described the work of the Women's Legion, or as it afterwards became, the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps. Even at that time she said that some four thousand women cooks were employed in the Army and thousands of women drivers in the Motor Trans-

port section. Lady Londonderry is slight and very youthful looking, full of vitality and "go." I remember how nice she looked in a very simple pale mauve frock with the dangling earrings she often affects and her beautiful pearls.

Mrs. Burleigh Leach, wearing a neat khaki uniform (this lady afterwards became Controller of the "Waacs"), spoke and mentioned that the Legion's badge, the Goddess of Victory holding a wreath, was designed by Lady Londonderry, but that unromantic persons would have it that the wreath was a frying-pan.

On another occasion Colonel Leigh Wood spoke and gave some very interesting details of the savings which had been made in Army house-keeping, the chair being taken for him by Lady Londonderry. As he explained, large quantities of fat were required for the manufacture of explosives. The fat collected from Army camps had then produced tallow sufficient to provide soap for the entire needs of the Army, Navy, and Government departments, with a surplus for public use, and eighteen hundred tons of glycerine for ammunition—sufficient to provide the propellant for eighteen million shells and without detracting from the soldiers' ration.

General Landon and, I think, Major Sykes attended this meeting. Shortly before then these gentlemen had given me much information about

military housekeeping and had taken me to see a camp near London, after which I felt quite able to assure captious audiences who grumbled at Army waste that they would do well to cease from hanging the dog for crimes which it had undoubtedly committed many months earlier, and turn their attention to the waste which then, and even now, still goes on in civilian homes. Of course housekeeping in camps varies considerably, and although great changes had by that time been made, Army housekeeping and cooking is still capable of improvement. Fat is valuable we know, but not as an accompaniment to tea. Yet I have seen tea served which had a skim of fat on it caused by it having been brewed in the cauldron in which the soup was made.

At one camp I visited dinner had just begun. The tables were covered with white American cloth and chastely decorated with despondent aspidistras modestly draped in pink paper, and although the meal provided was sufficient and quite well cooked it did not err, I thought, on the side of liberality.

On another occasion a Conference on Public Kitchens was the attraction of the afternoon. Lady Askwith presided and Colonel Laurie, of the Salvation Army, spoke of the Army's work in this direction. The Mayor of Hammersmith, who was, I think, the first organiser of a kitchen on a very

large scale ; the Rev. Benjamin Gregory, who was connected with Lady Askwith in running kitchens in the East End ; Mrs. Earle and various other persons joined in the discussion. Opposition to these Kitchens was made because, to put it baldly, they would make life too easy for women. Oh, woman—woman ! Heaven knows what you will be up to armed with the Vote and a little spare time.

Amongst other chairwomen and speakers were Mrs. Eric Chaplin, Lady Nott-Bower, Lady Rhondda, Mrs. Hudson Lyall, Evelyn Lady Alington, and Lady Sandhurst.

Some of the most difficult meetings at which I assisted were, I think, those which took place at various London Telephone Exchanges. For some reason the women employees thought that they had been singled out to be “ lectured ” on the subject of economy, instead of, as was the case, merely being asked as part of the general public to make the best of a difficult situation.

I availed myself of these visits to try and become familiar to some degree with the work of a telephone operator. Many a time since, when I have felt exasperated at being rung up to be informed : “ We don’t want you, thank you,” in the falsely sweet voice proper to the occasion, I have restrained my evil temper when I thought of the rows and rows of girls sitting in front of their switchboards



with an apparatus which looks like a mediæval instrument of torture fixed to their heads, while their hands move about amongst a tangle of different coloured cords. If I tried for a year I am sure that I could never become a telephone operator. I should find it easier to be a Prime Minister, I think.

At some of these meetings the speakers were able eventually to get on quite good terms with the audience, but on talking with the girls afterwards there was always the "why don't you go and talk to the rich, it is the rich who eat up all the food" attitude.

At that time we held several conferences at Grosvenor House, of what the newspapers termed "Leaders of London Society," so in order that the telephone employees should realise that the rich and not only the poor were asked to economise, I invited little parties from the telephone exchanges to attend these conferences, which they did. I wonder if they were impressed by a detail which struck me, that these audiences of the rich (except that many of the women composing them wore beautiful pearls) were no better dressed than those composed of the telephone employees?

Quite a funny thing happened anent these "Duchesses' Conferences," as they were nicknamed in the Ministry. The invitations to attend them were officially termed "Conferences of



Mistresses of Well-to-do Households," and it was only owing to the care for every detail of our work shown by our secretary, Miss Bellis, that by a typist's error these did not go out addressed to the "Mistresses of Well-to-do Householders !"

This same typist did not spare my character either, for when making out an expense sheet for a certain foreign visit, she explained the discrepancy in the charge for a cabin out and on the voyage home by saying : " Mrs. Peel shared a cabin with Mr. Dash, who, owing to his being in uniform, had been able to obtain it at half-price ! "

One of these conferences was held a few days after a certain ball had taken place which excited much adverse comment. On the morning of the meeting I received a telegram addressed to me personally : " Regret unable to be present meeting, but wish all success, for ' although on pleasure I am bent I have a frugal mind.' " Most people who read this will guess the signature of the message. Who, I wonder, was responsible for this little joke ?

Again I must be discreet, but I could not. I would tell of a very emphatic letter received from a well-known lady in political circles who refused to come to a conference because she said it would be a waste of her time and ours, while Mr. Prothero continued thus madly to plough up the land. Surely that lady should have known that the

Ministry of Food is not a synonymous term for the Board of Agriculture ?

One or two Ambassadors attended these conferences, including Mrs. Page, the wife of the then United States Ambassador.

I went to see Mrs. Page one day in Grosvenor Square with regard to some Ministry business. She came to me in the big double drawing-room, with its pale blue and gilt chairs, and then we went down to the library to join Mr. Page,<sup>1</sup> who was having tea, and although it was a warm day in summer I remember being struck with the extreme coldness of His Excellency's hands. I could feel the chill of them even through my gloves. Since these words were written Mr. Page has retired, owing to ill-health. Mrs. Page had just had some beautiful carnations and sprays of scented geraniums sent her, a little posy of which she gave to me.

A woman no longer young, very plainly dressed, she has a charming manner which would put the shyest person at ease.

A meeting at which I enjoyed speaking took place at St. Columba's Hall, Pont Street. Dr. Fleming, who has a talent for making short witty speeches, spoke on that same occasion.

A great work of hospitality to Scottish soldiers is done on Saturday and Sunday at St. Columba's Hall. The leave trains are met and the men who

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Page returned to America and died in December, 1918.

have to wait until the evening for the Scotch trains are entertained at the hall by their fellow countrymen and women.

I went to St. Columba's one Saturday to fetch my husband, who is one of the workers there, and the only one of English birth, though he can boast of a Scotch great-grandmother. The hall was full of men ready to start for King's Cross or Euston. They had formed two great circles and were singing "Auld Lang Syne," and then as hands unclasped a man called out "Three cheers for this little bit o' Scotland." Good-byes were said and the men filed out into the drizzling cold of a November evening, and as they marched they sang again a song which, sung as it was by men who had faced death and in a few short days would face it yet again, made one's heart ache :—

"Bonnie Charlie's now awa',  
Safely o'er the friendly main,  
Many a heart will break in twa,  
Should he ne'er come back again.

Sweet's the laverock's note and long,  
Lilting wildly up the glen,  
But aye to me he sings ae song,  
Will ye no' come back again?"

On several occasions my duties took me to the Mansion House, in some cases to attend meetings and on one occasion to interview the Lord Mayor, then Sir Charles Hanson.

Some of the meetings took place in the well-

known Egyptian Hall, so called from some Egyptian details in the decorations that have now disappeared. I was so intrigued by the Mansion House that I read up its history in a delightful book, entitled *Old London*.

The Egyptian Hall was designed by the Earl of Burlington and was intended to resemble an Egyptian chamber by Vitruvius. It is sufficiently large for four hundred guests to dine in it, and along the walls are niches filled with sculptured groups or figures, some of the best of which are by Foley. On one occasion when I saw it it was filled by a collection of sadly peevish mayors, town clerks, and their respective feminine belongings. They were discussing National Kitchens and Economy, and seemed very cross that there should be any necessity for either.

There are several other dining-rooms in the Mansion House, such as the Venetian Parlour and Wilkes' Parlour, as well as the drawing-room and ballroom, above which is the Justice Room, constructed in 1849, where the Lord Mayor sits daily.

The first stone of the Mansion House was laid in 1739, and it cost with the furniture £70,985 13s. 2d., the greater part of which was paid from fines received from persons who wished to be excused from serving as sheriffs. Why, I wonder, is it that people so dislike being sheriffs? Is it sheriffs who



have to see murderers hanged ? If so I quite understand their reluctance to accept the position. A man whose duty it was to be present once described to me an execution. It is a horrible affair, derogatory to every one concerned, including you and I, who are part of a public which permits such horrors to endure.

Some time ago there was a proposal to increase the salary (£10,000 a year) of the Lord Mayor, owing to the increased cost of living, but the Corporation would not agree to this change, though few Lord Mayors have been able to make ends meet on that sum. It would seem that the Lord Mayor will soon be the only worker who has not been granted a war bonus. The furniture in the Mansion House is renovated and renewed by the Corporation as occasion demands. Some is very hideous and some quite beautiful and all of it is expensive, which invariably seems to be regarded as an adequate apology for ugliness.

Last year many pieces of valuable antique furniture were brought to light, including some fine specimens of Sheraton and Chippendale. In the gaoler's room beneath the Police Court were a Sheraton arm-chair and a Chippendale writing-table of 1790. Another "find" was a mahogany Chippendale serpentine chest of drawers which originally formed part of a set of eight belonging in 1803 to the Venetian Parlour.



It was in the Egyptian Hall that I attended my last meeting in the guise of a "Lady Food Controller," which was the elegant title by which many Mayors with whom I hobnobbed elected to introduce me to my audiences.

## CHAPTER V

### THE PREPARATION OF SPEECHES

The history of potatoes—Sugar—Sir Charles Bathurst—"The Chief Government grocer"—Sugar beet and Napoleon—Food conditions in the first half of the nineteenth century—Cereals—Things and their makers.

THE work of preparing the many speeches which it was part of my duty to make was not light. Looking over a quantity of old notes I find that amongst the many books I studied were Mr. Beveridge's *Unemployment*, Miss Proud's *Welfare Work*, *The Principles of Scientific Management*, by F. W. Taylor, Meredith's *Economic History of England*, Mr. Seeböhm Rowntree's *Poverty*, and Booth's *Life and Labour in London*, *The Town and the County Labourer*, by the Hammonds, while Mr. Hutchinson's *Food and Dietetics* became one of my most treasured possessions. The Ministry of Food issued a news sheet in addition to an ever-widening stream of orders, and from them and the *Board of Trade Gazette* and the *Labour Gazette* I obtained much useful information. A careful perusal of the daily papers was necessary and I made constant applications to the scientific staff

of the Ministry, and especially to Sir Henry Thompson,<sup>1</sup> always most kind in giving us his help, for information with regard to food.

To go to a meeting and be asked suddenly of what glucose was made, and how it was prepared, while the next minute some one demanded information as to the comparative food value of maize and oatmeal, and a third questioner wished to know the relative shrinkage in cooking of frozen and unfrozen meat necessitated careful study, as readers may imagine.

The submarine menace became a perfect nightmare to me; it had to be mentioned in every speech dealing with the food problem, and almost every day some public personage made a fresh statement. On Monday Mr. Lloyd George would take a rosy view of the situation, which on Tuesday was contradicted by Sir Edward Carson. On Wednesday perhaps Mr. Winston Churchill or Mr. Bonar Law would have something to say on the matter, and on Thursday questions asked in the House would elicit information which did not seem to agree with anything that anybody else stated in the earlier part of the week. The exact figures were of course known to Lord Devonport and afterwards to Lord Rhondda; what would I have not given for a sight of those papers

<sup>1</sup> Sir Henry Thompson lost his life when the *Leinster* was torpedoed in October, 1918.

carefully enclosed in one envelope after another and guarded so jealously.

Mr. Prothero's speeches of course I always read, and with pleasure, for I am one of his greatest admirers.

Not only was it necessary to keep one's self informed as to the food production of our own country, but I made many notes from speeches by American, French, and Italian statesmen as well as from those made by our Dominion authorities. It was often no easy matter to collect reliable information for speeches, and I have more than once spent a morning visiting different authorities in the Ministry, and by piecing together what Sir Henry Rew, Sir Charles Bathurst, or later Mr. Clynes or Mr. Wintour told me I thus obtained a sort of composite photograph of the general position.

I collected interesting information bearing on food on every possible occasion and especially that which would bring into my speeches the human and dramatic element.

At the time of the great potato shortage I found that large numbers of people were extremely surprised to hear that potatoes were first introduced by the Spaniards, that John Hawkins brought them to England in 1563, and that they were popularised in Ireland by Sir Walter Raleigh, who grew them on his estate near Cork.

For a considerable period potatoes were looked upon with deep suspicion by the people. In certain parts of Scotland it was made obligatory to grow potatoes, but it proved very difficult to induce anyone to eat them when grown, for it was the popular delusion that they produced leprosy. The same distrust and dislike of potatoes were shown in France and Germany. They were introduced into France about 1775-1776 by Antoine Auguste Parmentier, who was born at Montdidier in 1737. He was a prisoner in the hands of the Germans, who seemed to have had somewhat the same ideas with regard to prisoners then as now, for although they would not touch potatoes themselves, they regarded them as fit food for their captives. Parmentier, being obliged to eat potatoes, found that he liked them and thrived on them, so when he regained his freedom and returned to France, being a friend of Louis XVI's *chef*, he induced that personage to cook and serve them at the King's table. Louis became so fond of this food that he wore a spray of potato flower and ultimately succeeded in introducing the potato into general use.

I think this history quite shocked some of my hearers, who thought that potatoes had been invented in the dim ages by some good Englishman, that they were and always had been British to their very middles. Potatoes are not merely a vegetable,



they are a British institution. Potatoes, policemen, boiled cabbage, the House of Commons, and umbrellas; they spell England.

At the time too, when sugar was so difficult to obtain, large numbers of people really believed that without sugar they and their children would die. They were astonished to learn that it was only during the last 200 years that sugar has been at all extensively used in this country.

Sugar of course has been known since time immemorial, but what the date of that period is I don't know. Seneca, for example, refers to sugar as the "honey of men's hands." The Chinese gained their knowledge of the art of sugar making from India somewhere about 766 B.C., and there is evidence that in the ninth century sugar was grown in Persia, and the Persian physicians in the tenth and eleventh centuries first introduced it into medicine. Sugar of Egyptian origin formed the staple of trade between the merchants of Venice and of London, and in 1319 there appears in the accounts of the Chamberlain of Scotland a payment at the rate of 1s. 9½d. per lb. for sugar; wool, which then constituted the great wealth of England, being largely exported and exchanged for it.

Throughout Europe sugar continued to be a costly luxury and an article of medicine until the increasing use of tea and coffee in the eighteenth

century brought it into general use. In 1700 the amount used in Great Britain was 10,000 tons ; in 1800 it had risen to 150,000 tons, and in 1914 to 2,459,158 tons, so that it really does seem as if we might consume less sugar without detriment to health.

I once asked quite a highly educated woman from what part of the sugar-cane sugar was obtained. She had not the slightest idea, and a week earlier to tell the truth neither had I, but as I had been reading up the subject I was longing to enjoy a display of my own knowledge ! “ The stem of the sugar-cane varies from 6 to 14 feet in height,” I assured her ; “ is 1 to 1½ inches thick, jointed at intervals of 3 to 6 inches, and its pith of open cellular structure contains the sugary juice.”

Almost every one likes to talk and few people like to listen, and my friend said : “ Do stop talking. I don't want to know *anything* more about sugar. I only want to be able to buy some.”

From sugar my thoughts naturally progress to Sir Charles Bathurst, who, as I have said, was at one time Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry and now holds two important positions, both connected with sugar. He is chairman of the Royal Commission on the sugar supply and director of Sugar Distribution under the Ministry of

Food. Thus he links the supply and distribution of sugar.

I ventured to enquire of Sir Charles how it was that he came to have such a knowledge of sugar, when every one had known him formerly as an expert on agriculture. Sir Charles discreetly ignored this question. Does he control the sugar supply for the same reason that the expert on fish of whom I have spoken controlled mangel-wurzels, and that Sir Alfred Butt of theatrical fame was called in to deal with the rationing scheme? It certainly seems more often than not that if a man has brains and is possessed of the organising quality he will deal with any task equally well.

Undoubtedly Sir Charles is to be complimented on his handling of sugar, in one way the most difficult of foods to control, because our entire supply comes from overseas. On the outbreak of War the price of sugar rose at once and yet in the fifth year of War sugar is costing us but 7d. per lb. It was the first article to be rationed and ever since it was rationed no one has applied for his half-pound in vain.

If sugar is difficult to handle because we have no home-grown supply it is an easier article than others to ration, in as much as it can be controlled from the start and it passes through comparatively few hands between the time that it is produced and comes into the possession of the consumer.

I remember on one occasion when Sir Charles was telling me something of the history of Sugar Control he referred to himself as the chief Government grocer. He may well be proud of that self-given title. Housekeepers may grumble that they cannot obtain sufficient sugar for jam-making. Before they grumble again let them try and picture to themselves the task of the sugar controller, who has to buy the sugar, and not only to buy it, but in spite of shortage of transport and submarine loss (and at one time when people were declaring that they could not manage on half a pound of sugar per head per week three great sugar ships were sunk in one week), bring this commodity overseas, there again to be met with the difficulties entailed by shortage of labour, and in the end allot it fairly and evenly through wholesaler and retailer so that now at the price of  $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. each one of us may receive that half-pound of sweetness which, valuable foodstuff as it is, is after all by no means a necessity of life.

As there seems to be a growing dislike to the creation of new peers, it may become again the custom to create saints, in which case Saint Charles of Bathurst would doubtless become the patron saint of housekeepers.<sup>1</sup>

Later on sugar beet became a topic of general

<sup>1</sup> Since these words were written Sir Charles Bathurst has become Lord Bledisloe.



interest and I had to learn something of its history, and as it seems such a waste of time to know things unless people know that you know them, I hasten to say that it was in 1747 that Andreas Marggraff, director of physical classes in the Academy of Sciences, Berlin, discovered the existence of sugar in beetroot, but no practical use was made of the discovery during his lifetime. The first sugar-beet factory was established by a pupil of his, near Breslau in 1801. The processes used were at first very imperfect, but the extraordinary increase in the price of sugar on the Continent caused by the blockade policy of Napoleon, caused an impetus to the industry and sugar-beet factories were established in Germany and France. In Germany the enterprise came to an end with the downfall of Napoleon I, but in France, where more scientific and economical methods of working were introduced, the industry was kept alive. It is pleasant to read that for once the Germans were not more scientific and successful than other people. Still, Germany afterwards resuscitated the sugar-beet industry until in 1914 80 per cent of our supply of sugar was derived from the beet, and nearly 70 per cent came from Germany and Austria, at first largely in the form of raw sugar which was refined here, providing considerable employment and maintaining an industry with a highly skilled technical staff. That state



of affairs, however, did not suit Germany—she decreased her exports of raw sugar and increased those of refined sugar so that our refineries shut up one after the other.

With our usual dislike of any new departure, we seem to have been sternly opposed to setting up the sugar-beet industry in England. People said there was not enough sun in England to grow sugar beet, forgetting that Sweden in the North grows a better beet with a higher sugar percentage than Southern Hungary.

Referring to an article in the *Outlook* of January 20th, 1917, I see that it is stated, "Herefordshire is very much better fitted for the crop than any of the German beet farms. Beet is an intensive crop and well suited to small holders. Beyond all question the erection of factories would restore workers to the land and would, as in Germany, France, and Holland, be the means of spreading the cult of scientific farming, especially among the smaller and less skilled men."

I wonder if we shall grow sugar beet after the War or again buy it from Germany.

Meantime individuals have learned to supplement the sparse supply of sugar by the use of sugar beet, making from it a syrup and also a rough sugar which can at considerable cost of labour be converted into white lump sugar, but which for ordinary purposes is used in its toffee-like state.

At the time when the shortage of meat was acute and it became necessary that pulses and cereals should be largely employed I found that audiences were interested to know something of the history of these foods. When I informed a women's meeting that rice was the principal food of nearly one-third of the human race my audience said: "Fancy that!" some in tones of pity and others in tones of scorn. In Europe rice is grown on the plains of Lombardy and in Valencia in Spain, while Carolina rice of course comes from the state of that name, yet the introduction of rice into the United States took place only about the middle or close of the seventeenth century. It does not seem to be known whether India or China was the first home of rice, but at all events it has been cultivated in India as long as we know anything of the history of that country, and there are 1400 different specimens of rice in the Calcutta Museum. It is not, as is commonly supposed, the chief food supply of India, where in certain areas millet is the principal foodstuff.

As the months passed we learned to use many foodstuffs in ways which hitherto had not been generally practised. To make up for the lack of sugar we stiffened jams with sago. Large numbers of people referred to sago as a cereal, whereas it is really a substance obtained from the pith of several species of palms. Each tree yields about 600 lbs.

of pith and the trees take about fifteen years to mature, and grow in Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Malacca, and Siam. Sago meal is eaten by natives in the form of a porridge, and they also bake it in earthenware moulds so that it becomes a sort of biscuit. Large quantities of it go to China to be pearled and bleached for shipment to Europe, and it comes to the consumer as the common brown sago, pearl sago, and sago flour. The stem of the trees is cut into lengths, split open, and the pith extracted and placed in a sieve-like vessel. Water is applied to separate the flour and carry it into a second vessel, where it is soon deposited. The water is then run off, the flour dried and put into little baskets made of sago leaves.

Tapioca, on the other hand, is a tuber of immense size, which weighs often as much as 30 lbs. The plant is shrubby with brittle stems 6 to 8 feet high, with crooked branches, on the ends of which grow large leaves and green flowers. Tapioca is a farinaceous substance obtained from manioc or cassava, a native of tropical Africa, cultivated there and in other tropical countries. The Brazilian name for the plant is marrioc, the West Indian *cassa va*, and in Peru it is known as *yuca*. The root is grated, dried on hot metal plates and roughly powdered.

But as I am not endeavouring to compile a new edition of that volume from which I suffered in my

youth—*The Child's Guide to Knowledge*—perhaps it is time that I ceased to discourse of foods and their histories. When I keep a school (which were I a rich woman I would do) I shall teach my pupils history and geography chiefly by means of visits to places where things are made or grown, and when that is impossible I shall have cinema representations of these happenings.

Of what high educational value it would be to a child to visit factories where the articles which it uses in its everyday life are made. Everybody is far too apt to accept the articles of necessity, comfort, or luxury with which they are surrounded as matters of course ; they do not realise that the sago they eat in a pudding is procured by the life-toil of thousands of people. A telephone to many of us is merely an instrument which stands on a table, and by the help of which we ring up people who would much rather be left in peace. It is in reality not only a very wonderful invention, but practically part of the life of numbers of girls and young women without whose manipulations we could not use it.

The lid of a tin is an object with which most of us are familiar, but it does not occur to many of us to consider that that lid was made by a girl, possibly a girl with fair hair and brown eyes who had a young man who was killed in the War, and that she works for ten hours a day making lids for



tins. We need to connect the thing with its maker and so to learn a greater respect both for maker and thing.

During my time in the Ministry of Food I saw so many things made in the great factories of this country that I learned a great respect for the work of men's hands. Now I can scarcely bear to see even an empty cardboard box thrown away because with the vision of the thing comes a vision of the life of he who made it. The mention of an empty box rouses a memory. How many of the people who will read these words know under what conditions such articles are produced ?

It was on a hot summer day that I visited the home of a cigarette-box maker—an elderly woman living in a four-roomed home, one room of which was let to “an old gentleman.” “Rents are high,” my hostess explained, “and even though the girls earn good money, father can't do much and everything's dear.” This woman had brought up seven children in these three rooms. Four girls remained, three working in factories, the youngest still at school, and all four slept in one tiny room. The kitchen was very small and there the mother carried on her trade of box-making, necessitating a fire on which to heat the glue. Oh ! the smell of hot glue and the heat of that tiny room ! And yet in that room food for six people was cooked



and eaten. In that room six people lived, and still the mother said of her girls: "They're real stay-at-home girls they are, and nothing they won't do for their mother!"

When I see a cigarette box tossed carelessly into the waste-paper basket I think of that mother and the love which makes of those crowded, evil-smelling little rooms a home.

When I wash my hands my nail-brush brings me another vision—of a lively old gipsy-like woman and an older silent white-bearded man with the face of a dreamer, living in a little room under the roof, most of which was taken up by the bed. These old people put bristles into nail brushes. They sleep, eat, and work in that one room, from the walls of which the paper hangs in tatters. "The landlord 'e's done all 'e can, dearie—but the damp's right *in* that corner."

The hands of these two old folk are cut and scarred with the wire with which they work, but "Oh, we don't think nothing of that, dearie, but I mus' say I do wish as we 'ad room for another table; it's a job clearing up all them bristles when it comes dinner-time."

I make many pictures out of what I see and hear and read—some of them beautiful pictures and some such that I would I could put them out of my mind once and for all.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE PREPARATION OF SPEECHES (*continued*)

Shockers—Milk—East and West—How some people live in England—Food prices during the Siege of Paris—London prices—Prices in Paris in September, 1918—Italian Food Economy aphorisms—American Food Economy propaganda—A dinner in one dish—Bergholt's verses—The cost of living in Berlin.

A SUPPLEMENT to the journal of the Board of Agriculture would not generally be classed in the "shilling shocker" category. It may or may not cost 1s. (I did not buy it so I do not know), but certainly at times it shocks. A copy of that decorous document showed me a picture of the housekeeping of the rich and the housekeeping of the poor. The meat consumption in 1915 and 1916 was 2·28 lbs. per head per week, whereas in 1916-17 it had fallen to 2·24. In pre-War days the women and children of the lower working class seldom ate meat more than once or at most twice a week, that article of food being kept for the father and wage-earner, thus one realises what the consumption of meat amongst the well-to-do must have been.

Soon after War broke out a lady wrote to me asking for criticisms of her household books as she felt she was being extravagant, and I found that the quantity of butchers' meat bought for her household (I will not say *used* for her household) averaged  $2\frac{1}{2}$  lb. per head per day.

At another time, making enquiry into the consumption of milk in this country, I discovered that from figures compiled for the year 1916, the consumption of milk in London per head per year in the East End averaged 4 gallons; in the West End 34 gallons, and that from figures compiled by Mr. Christopher Turner for England and Wales the consumption per head per year was: lower class 5 gallons, middle class 12 gallons, upper class 31 gallons.

If milk were allotted to children between the ages of 2 and 13 as follows: children of 2 and 3,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  pints per day; children of 3 to 5, one pint per day; 5 to 14, half-pint per day, this would take 50 per cent of the country's milk supply. These figures show that in spite of all that has been done, very much more remains to be done to ensure that the child of poor parents shall obtain its rightful share of milk. When speaking on this question to women whom I thought would have some knowledge of the life of the poor, I often found that in a vague way they imagined that children did not obtain enough milk simply

because their mothers did not trouble to buy it for them, the fact being, of course, that milk, even in pre-War days, was far too expensive a food for a mother of a family whose husband was earning anything from £1 to £2 a week to buy in sufficient quantities.

Vast numbers of children never taste any other milk than that which comes out of a tin, and that only in small quantities.

Some housekeeping budgets given in Mr. Seeböhm Rowntree's *Poverty* throw some light on the pre-War diet of the poor. I republish here one of these human documents.

*Carter—Wages (regular) 20s.*

The father drives a lorry ; he is now in regular work, but was out of work for six months last year. During that period the family incurred a heavy debt, which Mrs. D. is now striving to clear off. Questioned as to how they lived during these six months, when Mr. D. was earning no regular money, Mrs. D. replied that she did not know ; her brother was very kind to her and bought shoes for herself and the children, her mother gave her odd things, and for the rest they got into debt.

There are two children, a boy aged five and a little girl aged two.

The budget was kept for eight consecutive weeks

during February and March, 1901. The total income during this period was £8 14s. 6d. Mr. D. made some overtime, and Mrs. D. was able to earn a little money.

The deficiency in the energy value of the diet amounts to .5 per cent, that of the protein supply to 18 per cent.

*Purchases during week ending February 22nd, 1901*

Friday.—2 bags of coal 2s. 6d. ;  $1\frac{1}{2}$  stone flour 2s. ; yeast 1d. ; 4 lb. sugar 7d. ;  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. tea  $4\frac{1}{2}$ d. ; 1 lb. butter 1s. ;  $3\frac{1}{2}$  lb. bacon 1s. 5d. ; firewood 2d. ;  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. lard  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. ; baking powder 1d. ; 6 eggs 6d. ; candles 1d. ; matches  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. ; 1 lb. soap 2d. ; starch 1d. ; soda 1d.

Saturday.—Doctor's bill 1s. 3d. ; frying-pan  $6\frac{1}{2}$ d. ; 2 teaspoons  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. ; 1 tablespoon 2d. ;  $\frac{1}{2}$  stone potatoes 5d. ; cabbage 2d. ; 3 lb. pork 1s.  $7\frac{1}{2}$ d. ; 1 lb. onions 1d. ; 1 quart oil  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. ;  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. rice 1d. ; milk 1d. ;  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. coffee 3d. ; kippers 2d. ; 2 tins condensed milk 5d.

Monday.—Insurance 11d. ; club 1s. 3d. ; doctor's bill 1s.

Tuesday.—Debt 1s. ; 1 lb. figs 5d.

*Menu of Meals provided during Week ending  
February 22nd, 1901*

Friday.—*Breakfast* : Bread, butter, tea. *Dinner* : Bread, butter, toast, tea. *Tea* : Bread, butter, tea.



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Saturday.—*Breakfast*: Bread, bacon, coffee.  
*Dinner*: Bacon, potatoes, pudding, tea. *Tea*: Bread, butter, shortcake, tea. *Supper*: Tea, bread, kippers.

Sunday.—*Breakfast*: Bread, butter, shortcake, coffee. *Dinner*: Pork, onions, potatoes, Yorkshire pudding. *Tea*: Bread, butter, shortcake, tea. *Supper*: Bread and meat.

Monday.—*Breakfast*: Bread, bacon, butter, tea. *Dinner*: Pork, potatoes, pudding, tea. *Tea*: Bread, butter, tea. *Supper*: One cup of tea.

Tuesday.—*Breakfast*: Bread, bacon, butter, coffee. *Dinner*: Pork, bread, tea. *Tea*: Bread, butter, boiled eggs, tea. *Supper*: Bread, butter, bacon, tea.

Wednesday.—*Breakfast*: Bread, bacon, butter, tea. *Dinner*: Bacon and eggs, potatoes, bread, tea. *Tea*: Bread, butter, tea.

Thursday.—*Breakfast*: Bread, butter, coffee. *Dinner*: Bread, bacon, tea. *Tea*: Bread, butter, tea.

Compare this budget with a typical pre-War upper middle-class budget :—

Early tea and bread and butter.

*Breakfast*: One or two hot dishes, possibly one cold dish. Bread, toast, butter, jam and marmalade. Possibly scones and fruit.

*Eleven o'clock, servants:* Cocoa, bread, and butter, etc.

1-1.30: *Luncheon* of two or three courses with vegetables, cheese, biscuits, and butter, possibly fruit and coffee. Generally tea for servants.

4.30 : A substantial tea.

7.45 : Three or four course dinner. Possibly coffee and dessert. Substantial supper for servants and often milk or cocoa at bed-time."

And yet people were always ready to assure us that they were so glad to hear that we were trying to teach economy to the working classes.

There was and is waste of food in the homes of people of every class, but it is in the homes of the rich who have fuel, apparatus, and money with which to pay skilled persons to cook for them that the most glaring waste takes place.

Much bitter feeling was excited by people—well-meaning no doubt—who preached economy to the poor, knowing nothing of their lives and the difficulties which beset them on every side. In one country place at which I spoke to a large audience consisting chiefly of agricultural labourers and their wives, the lady who took the chair assured them that meat was unnecessary—she advised a diet of pulses, cereals, and cream !

Details of prices paid for food during the Siege of Paris interested many of my audiences. They

were given to me by Mr. Sydney Walton, who had obtained a copy of an historical souvenir of the Siege of Paris dated September 18th, 1870–January 28th, 1871. It was dedicated to the martyrs of France. As everyone knows, even the animals in the Zoo were eaten. Elephant flesh was sold at 15s. per lb., bear's at 11s. 3d.; a rabbit was 45s.; a fowl 52s. 6d.; mule or donkey 6s. a lb.; dog 2s. 8d. per lb.; a crow cost 4s. 6d.; a cat 11s. 3d.; cauliflowers and cabbages were 6s. each; carrots and turnips 1s. 9d. and 1s. 2d. per lb.; fresh butter 45s. per lb.; dried haricot beans were 5s. 3d. for  $1\frac{3}{4}$  lbs., and potatoes 37s. 6d. for 18 lb.; olive oil cost 15s. a pint, and cheese 22s. 6d. per lb, and a note is made of the fact that persons obtained 12 ozs. of dry bread after waiting three hours in twelve degrees of frost.

On the day on which I wrote these words I noted some of the prices of food in London shops. Milk 9d. per quart; butter 2s. 6d. per lb.; tea (controlled price) 2s. 8d.; bread (subsidised price 9d. the quartern loaf at an estimated cost to the country of £40,000,000 for that year); sugar 6d. a lb.; honey 2s. 10d. the lb. pot; 3 lb. of broad beans 11d.; a cauliflower 1s.; 2-lb. tin of syrup 1s. 8d.; a fowl 12s. 6d.; beef (only foreign stewing steak procurable) 1s.  $8\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb.; suet 1s. 6d. per lb.; plaice 1s. 8d. per lb.; bananas 5d. each; a tin of peaches 4s. 6d.; 1 jelly packet

10d. ; preserved angelica 4s. per lb. ; no other preserved fruit obtainable ; a round flat sponge cake about the size of a tea plate 2s. 3d.

To live as fairly careful persons lived in the early part of 1914 cost roughly 10s. 6d. to 12s. 6d. a head for food and clearing materials. To live in exactly the same manner to-day would cost about 25s., while even on the reduced diet which now generally obtains my knowledge of other people's housekeeping causes me to fix 18s. 6d. to 20s. per head per week as an average figure for ordinary upper middle-class living, and that even when the food and cleaning materials are carefully bought and carefully used. Nevertheless, in servantless households where the mistress has learned to cook and uses her brains I have found nice living at a cost of 12s. 6d. to 14s. 6d. a head, while where care is not practised 22s. to 25s. a head is spent per week on quite ordinary fare.

In Paris, much about the same time that prices at high-class London shops were such as I have quoted, the following note appeared in the *Times* :—

“ The high price of living is being studied by the Ministry of Labour and a table has just been published showing the increased cost of absolute essentials during the last four years. To feed four people in a working-man's home, for bread, meat,



bacon, butter, eggs, milk, cheese, potatoes, dried vegetables, sugar, salad oil, paraffin, and methylated spirit, the average cost per annum, according to prices in the third quarter of 1914, represented 1004f. (£40). In 1915 and 1916 at the same season it had risen to 1235f. and 1420f. respectively (£49 10s. and £57), while in 1917 it was 1845f. (£73 16s.). By the end of June this year it had increased to 2331f. (£93 4s.). This latter sum represents the enormous increase of 132 per cent over prices before the War. No wonder it is hard to make both ends meet and that there is a cry for increased salaries."

Study of food conditions in England during the Napoleonic wars interested me greatly, though I found it most difficult to obtain the information for which I sought. One can imagine the distress of the working people in 1801 when the price of the quartern loaf was fixed by the Lord Mayor for London at 1s. 3d. It rose eventually to 1s. 11½d., and that at a time when the average wages of artisans and mechanics was 18s. to 25s. a week, and that of agricultural labourers 10s. to 12s.

In 1800 an Act was passed to enable barley and oatmeal to be mixed with flour, but was so grossly abused that it was repealed. It was also illegal to sell bread which had not been baked for twenty-four hours. Parliament also sanctioned provisions for the limitation of the bread consumption of the



wealthier classes and the King adopted measures for that purpose in his own household.

Starvation was not rare and privation was general, for prices of all foods were terribly high, and "substitutes" such as rice were extensively used in place of bread.

Then, as now, animals were rationed and there was the same outcry against profiteers, otherwise "regrators or forestallers." So bitter was the feeling that it led to bread riots which were dispersed by the military. Of a truth the record of the life of the poor in the first half of the nineteenth century is a sad one.

Kind people often sent me information which they thought would be useful to me, and I received some interesting Italian Food Economy aphorisms, amongst which were : "He that wastes to-day will be hungry to-morrow." "He that wastes in his own house increases the price of his neighbour's dinner." "Wasted food belongs to no one ; it might have belonged to all." "The man who laughs at you for saving to-day will envy you to-morrow."

I obtained much interesting matter from the American Food Control Authorities, who certainly did their propaganda work extraordinarily well and put the cause of economy before the people in an attractive fashion, very different from the official methods often adopted here.

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When it was part of my work to prepare information on the preparation and cooking of food I had to be very obstinate before I was allowed to issue one-page leaflets set out in such a fashion that people who had not the reading habit could obtain information at a glance, or at all events as much as would incite a desire to learn more.

These were, I think, the words of Mr. Hoover, the American Food Controller : " Any act of waste is a robbery," and so it is, not only in war but in peace, and I wish I had read them in time to borrow them for use in some of the leaflets which I prepared.

Amongst the American Food Economy leaflets which came to me was a clever one on the " Dinner in one Dish." This suggestion I afterwards elaborated, receiving the following verses from " Bergholt," the well-known writer on Bridge :—

In my paper I read that we none of us need  
To cook more than one dish for a dinner ;  
Butter-beans, for a start, will bring balm to that part  
Of woman, or man, which is inner.

Two ounces of rice should amply suffice  
For the " starch of the average diet " ;  
While tomatoes (1 lb.) will effective be found  
Abdominal cravings to quiet.

To mix them aright, soak the beans overnight ;  
And steam them two hours until tender ;  
Then their crudeness allay with tomato *purée*,  
And set down, to keep warm, in the fender.

Compounded with art, some stock will impart  
A rich flavour of meat to the meal ;  
Serve the total, all hot, in an earthenware pot,  
[I am quoting from DOROTHY PEEL.]

Bergholt afterwards used these lines in an acrostic in the *Queen* newspaper.

In the autumn of 1917 Mrs. Sefton Delmer, wife of the well-known Sefton Delmer, who had been a Professor of English History at the Berlin University, came to see us and gave us much interesting information anent life in Berlin, from which city she had lately returned.

Mrs. Delmer described the Germans in Berlin as looking drawn and thin, and being very irritable and nervy. The Military Governor of Berlin had been obliged to issue a warning to shopkeepers that extreme rudeness to customers would be a punishable offence. I fancy that some people would be rather glad if a similar rule came into force in England, though doubtless the shopkeepers would protest that they are driven nearly distracted by the unreasonableness of the customer.

German women who had saved money during their thrifty, hardworking lives were spending that much valued capital on unrationed foods at fabulous prices, for they declared that the money was of no use to them if they had to starve in order to keep it.

Fuel was as scarce as food, and woollen stuffs

were selling at 30s. a yard in Berlin, while the allowance of clothing to each woman was 2 dresses, 2 blouses, 1 coat, 3 of any under garment, 6 handkerchiefs, 2 pairs of boots. In order to get a permit to buy an article of dress the purchaser had to declare on oath that she did not possess the above allowance of that article.

Some articles of food in the following list were unrationed and could be obtained occasionally by rich people. Such articles as fresh fish and poultry were of this nature, but the vast majority of the Berlin population could not afford to buy them.

*Foodstuffs actually received by each person  
per week*

Meat.— $\frac{1}{2}$  lb.

Lard.—Once a month  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. allowed instead of meat.

Potatoes.—5 lb.

Kohl-ruben.—A kind of large coarse turnip.

When potatoes were short some kohl-ruben was allowed.

Bread.— $4\frac{1}{2}$  lb.

Oatmeal.— $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. once a fortnight.

Barley.— $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. per fortnight. This distribution became fairly regular when other things became so scarce.

Tea.—None.

Cocoa.—None.

Coffee.— $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. of substitute once in six weeks (on rations).

Chocolate.—None.

Jam.— $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. vegetable jam substitute once in six weeks.

Bacon.—None.

Ham.—None.

Milk.—None. All milk was reserved for invalids and children below the ages of six years. Families who had children over six but below ten years of age received one quart of skimmed milk once a week per household irrespective of the number of children.

Cheese.— $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. at rare intervals if stood for in a two-hour queue.

Fresh fruit.—None.

Dried fruit.—None.

Eggs.—Sometimes one a week, sometimes one a fortnight.

Green vegetables.—None.

Biscuits.—None.

Rice.—None.

Sago.—None.

Tapioca.—None.

Semolina.—None.

Butter.—Less than 2 ozs.

Margarine.—1 oz.

Fish.—An occasional half herring if the purchaser stood in a queue for it.



Sugar.— $\frac{3}{4}$  lb. once a fortnight.

Treacle or golden syrup.—Could be had instead of sugar.

Mr. Frederick William Wile was kind enough to give me some information as to affairs in Germany, and later some interesting articles by Mr. Pyke, a returned German prisoner, appeared in the *Daily Mail*, and others in *The Times* by Mr. Davis, the Kaiser's ex-dentist, which bore out what Mrs. Sefton Delmer had said.

The same principle which actuates nurses to incite children to leave a "clean plate" because "there's lots of poor little children, my dear, who haven't *any* dinner to eat" seemed to hearten up audiences. It appeared to please them deeply to learn how much worse off were people in other countries than we at home.

In this country we have only lately begun to feel any of the material hardships of war, and it would be a strange thing indeed if we civilians could not endure discomfort without grumbling in return for the sacrifices which are made for us by our fighting men. The words of Mr. Lloyd George come back to me: "Be the comrades of your soldiers."

## CHAPTER VII

### THE MINISTRY UNDER LORD RHONDDA

The appointment of Lord Rhondda—"At least one woman"—Changes in the Ministry—Mr. Ulick Wintour—Mr. Beveridge—Captain Tallents—The twins move to the nurseries—Lord Rhondda: his childhood; at Clifton; the art of delegation; his personal charm; Lord Rhondda in business and in politics; his illness and death.

**B**UT enough for the moment of my own experiences: let me return to the Ministry and its internal arrangements.

Directly it was known that Lord Devonport had resigned rumour concerned itself with his successor. Amongst names mentioned were those of Lord Rothermere, Mr. Robert Smillie and Lord Milner.

Although Lord Devonport's resignation was officially announced on June 2nd days passed and no new appointment was made. It seemed that the position of Food Controller was not one for which there was great competition: there was indeed rather a "dilly, dilly, dilly, come and be killed" tone about the invitation. Study of Food Control in other countries, especially in Germany, was not encouraging.

In Germany and Austria compulsory rationing had not prevented injustice ; it had resulted in the forgery of food tickets on a vast scale, and it had not secured fair division of food in town and country. It had caused irritation and resentment, and this in a country where the filling up of forms and making of returns is generally practised and understood. Furthermore any system of rationing is costly and necessitates the services of large numbers of people at a time when labour is scarce.

At this time, too, the public were very angry with the traders, whom they termed "profiteers," and the traders in their turn were angry because what they deemed fair trading was termed "profiteering," while the Ministry of Food was faced with the problem of reconciling the views of buyer and seller ; limiting prices and yet keeping up supplies—tasks to appal the bravest man.

At last came the news that Lord Rhondda had accepted the post of Food Controller. Every one realises that it was a plucky action on his part to undertake so difficult a position, for there was then no reason to suppose that he would achieve less unpopularity than had fallen to the lot of other Controllers.

The new Minister made his first public appearance at Grosvenor House at a conference of the heads of sections at which he said little but "How do you do ?" and that with a charming smile but

in a voice so weak and low that it was scarcely audible at the end of the conference room. His unruffled manner was noticeable at a later conference at which I was present. Those who came to confer were entirely opposed to the scheme put before them. They said so plainly, or rather they did not say so plainly, for most of them mumbled in such a way that only those quite near could hear them.

The attitude which they adopted was that they had too much to do already and couldn't and wouldn't do anything more. So Lord Rhondda said good-bye to them with smiles and thanks, and that was the end of that particular project. I was the only woman present on that occasion, for Mrs. Reeves was away speaking. I am not sufficiently modern to enjoy such a position, but I did summon courage to draw Mr. Clynes' attention to the fact that no suggestion that women should serve on Food Control Committees had been made in the scheme as put before the meeting. The wording was then altered to "at least one woman," which if not what I could have wished was better than nothing.

Later I referred this point to Captain Tallents, who wrote as follows :—

"DEAR MRS. PEEL,

In reply to your question as to when reference was first made to representation of



women on Local Food Committees, I find a clause inserted in the earliest (confidential) rationing memorandum of February, 1917, stating that 'the appointment of at least one woman as a Local Food Commissioner in each district was suggested.'

This I hope is the information you require.

Yours sincerely,

S. TALLENTS."<sup>1</sup>

It was therefore no doubt through a mistake that the words "at least one woman" were not included in the scheme as put forward at the conference to which I refer.

I remember thinking that if only one woman was elected (which often proved to be the case) and she disliked her solitary position as much as I, I did not envy her.

The Ministry of Food has always appealed, and wisely, to the women of this country to give it their assistance, owning that the success of any kind of rationing practically rested with them. Women were asked to economise, to help others to economise, to learn to cook better than they had ever cooked before (and, indeed, they might well do that), to bear the grumblings of households who could not then understand the necessity for drastic changes in their diet—women were, as usual, to do

<sup>1</sup> Since then it has been suggested that a larger number of women should serve upon these committees.



most of the work, but when it came to control all that could be said was that at least one woman should be included in the Food Control Committees.

Later, too, although we were told that food was a woman's question (I wonder if I shall ever discover what a woman's question is, for even women's clothes, for example, do not only concern women, while feeding babies, considering that many of those babies are boys and that the others will probably be the mothers of boys, can scarcely be a woman's question), not one woman was appointed a Food Commissioner—seldom indeed was she permitted to become even an Assistant Food Commissioner.

A like policy was also pursued with regard to National Kitchens, as will be seen if reference is made to the chapter dealing with the Kitchen movement.

During the first weeks of Lord Rhondda's reign an uncertain feeling spread over the Voluntary Economy Section of the Food Ministry. The new Controller might have new ideas, he might wish to apply new methods; it was difficult to organise fresh undertakings with the feeling that they might come to nothing in the end. The public felt the same; every one waited for a lead, and, unfortunately, it was not forthcoming until nearly three months later.

Lord Rhondda very naturally required time to consider the problems which confronted him, but this long delay proved damaging to the Voluntary Economy Cause. Mr. Kennedy Jones, Director-General of Economy, blew out of the Ministry as suddenly as he had blown in; Sir Henry Rew, much regretted by those who had worked under him, returned to the Board of Agriculture and his place was taken by Mr. Ulick Wintour.

After the appointment of Lord Rhondda Sir Charles Bathurst returned for a time to Grosvenor House and then departed to Great Smith Street. Mr. Beveridge remained as second secretary, but Mrs. Mair, who had acted as his secretary, became an Assistant Director and took on her shoulders the distribution of bacon, and Miss Kate Manley was permitted by the Board of Education to take charge of the Cookery Section. Lady Amherst of Hackney came to work on the collection of waste and Captain Tallents took charge of the Rationing Section, and a very important appointment was made—that of Mr. Clynes as Parliamentary Secretary.

Innumerable other changes took place and hundreds of new appointments were made, the number of the staff being gradually increased from some four hundred to over four thousand, and, needless to say, amongst those four thousand there were many important personages whom I never even saw.

It was not long before the Minister, Mr. Clynes, Mr. Wintour, and most of the personnel of the Ministry proper moved to Westminster, Grosvenor House and its dependencies in Upper Grosvenor Street and Park Street proving too small and inconvenient for their needs.

The Voluntary Economy Section and some other sections were left in Mayfair, and this cutting off of the Economy Section from the Ministry proper helped, I think, to make the work more difficult.

Lord Rhondda and Mr. Clynes were housed on the first floor of Palace Chambers, overlooking the Houses of Parliament, and Mr. Wintour on the second floor.

I had known Mr. Wintour and his family for many years, and had stayed at his home, his elder brother who was killed in the Battle of Jutland being a friend of my husband, but of Ulick Wintour himself I had seen nothing since the days of his boyhood until I met him again in the hall of Grosvenor House a day or two after he took up his position in the Food Ministry.

Mr. Wintour was the youngest of a large family, coming of good old stock but not possessed of large means, and he had therefore to make his way in the world without the assistance of wealth or very much family influence. As he said of himself, his jobs have been many—but, as he does not say,

he has shown unusual ability in his handling of them.

After leaving school he entered a bank, but that position did not content him for long. He became "bear-leader" to Prince Abhakara, one of the sons of the King of Siam, and then entered the Chinese Customs, and became one of "Hart's young men." Sir Robert Hart showed him very great kindness, and there is no doubt that he thought very well of him.

Amongst his work in China he was entrusted with the organisation of the Postal Service of that country, and it was while engaged on this work that the Boxer Rebellion broke out, and Peking was besieged.

Owing to domestic ties Mr. Wintour ultimately gave up his work in China and returned to England, and later obtained an appointment in the Board of Trade through the good offices of Sir Francis Hopwood. Later he became secretary to a Committee of Enquiry dealing with International Exhibitions, of which Sir Alfred Bateman was the chairman.

It was quite evident that England was sadly behind the times in its treatment of international trade. A permanent organisation to deal with such questions was needed, and the result of the enquiry was that a special department of British trade was set up.

During the next five years Mr. Wintour was



connected with the organisation of the exhibitions held in Brussels, Turin, Rome, Buenos Ayres, Ghent, and Leipzig. Many readers of this book will remember the great fire which destroyed so large a part of the Brussels Exhibition in 1910 and the wonderful way in which the exhibition was built up again. Night and day for a month men worked to reconstruct what had taken a year to bring into being. This exhibition brought about very good feeling between the Belgians and ourselves, and many were the manifestations of gratitude evoked from the people of Belgium by our prompt action in saving their exhibition from disaster. This feeling was shown in a great demonstration of gratitude which took the form of an enormous procession. Who knows what effect this Brussels Exhibition, the great fire and the subsequent proof of alertness and ability on the part of the English representatives may have had in strengthening the good feeling between England and Belgium in these days of their joint adversity?

In 1914 when war broke out Mr. Wintour was in Paris arranging for an exhibition there. Shortly after this many foreign delegates came to London to see what could be done with regard to buying supplies for their armies, and as Mr. Wintour knew so many of these gentlemen and was in addition an excellent linguist it fell to his lot to look after them.



Some time later an International Commission to buy supplies was formed.

At the time that Lord Kitchener was building up his new Army he was very much troubled because he could not obtain the supplies which he required. "Why is this?" he demanded, and was told that the Allies were buying in competition. "Who is buying for them?" "Mr. Wintour." "Then Wintour's got to come and buy for me," he ordered, and shortly afterwards appointed him Director of Army Contracts. When holding this position Mr. Wintour worked with an Advisory Committee, of which Lord Rhondda was a member, and so it was that when Lord Rhondda accepted the position of Food Controller he made it a condition that Mr. Wintour should accompany him as first secretary.

Mr. Wintour is a tall good-looking man, with great charm of manner and a most interesting talker when in the mood. He is much interested in education, and laments the stupefying effect which what is termed education as conducted in our most expensive schools has upon the young. I remember that he once told me he owed much to one of his sisters who implanted in him at a very early age a love of reading.

He likes everything very well done, and a day or two after his arrival at Grosvenor House his room was furnished with care—his shaded lamp and tea-

tray set ready. Now he inhabits a suite of rooms in Palace Chambers consisting of messengers' room, waiting room, secretaries' room (Mr. Tallboys, one of his secretaries, has helped me many a time, for which I owe him thanks), and his own apartment, large and furnished in dignified mahogany, the windows of which look out over the Houses of Parliament. On the last occasion on which I saw him in his official surroundings the tea-tray was ready, and he gave me an excellent cup of tea. So it is not only these much written about "lady clerks" (a gruesome term) of Whitehall who drink tea in their offices. Practically every man I have ever met in official life drank tea, and as a rule one of his feminine underlings made it for him.

Mr. Wintour is yet young and the future is before him. Even if he did nothing more than he has done already he must be written down as a successful man.<sup>1</sup>

Another important official in the Ministry was the second secretary, Mr. Beveridge, and if ever the history of Food Control during this great war comes to be written he is the man who should write it, for he knows its history from A to Z, having dealt with it before Lord Devonport was appointed in the days when such matters were the concern of the Board of Trade.

<sup>1</sup> Since I wrote these words Mr. Wintour has left the Ministry of Food to become Controller of H.M. Stationery Office.

Mr. Beveridge was born into the Civil Service, so to speak, his father being in the Indian Civil Service, and it is interesting to note that he passed first in the first examination ever held for that service. His son William Henry was born in Darjeeling, educated at Charterhouse and at Balliol, where he took a double first. He then read for the Bar, interesting himself meanwhile especially in labour problems, and although in politics a Liberal, became a leader writer for the *Morning Post*. In doing this, however, he never stooped to sell his opinions, for he wrote as he thought.

It was through Mr. Winston Churchill that he entered the Board of Trade, where he worked on the Unemployment Insurance Act, eventually becoming Director of Labour Exchanges and author of that well-known work, *Unemployment*. It was through the Labour Exchanges that the mobilisation of labour was carried on during the first six months of the War.

From the Board of Trade Mr. Beveridge was transferred to the Ministry of Munitions, and there his cousin, Mrs. Mair, who now controls bacon, acted as his secretary, working with him on the first Munitions of War Act. This and similar work continued until September, 1916, and Mr. Beveridge then returned as Assistant Secretary to the Board of Trade, and continued to deal especially with the food problems of the day, coming into the Ministry

of Food as second secretary on the appointment of Lord Devonport.

From the Board of Trade also came Captain Tallents, who in 1911 was working in the Labour Exchange Department with Mr. Beveridge, and who was specially concerned with unemployment insurance. Directly war broke out in August, 1914, Captain Tallents joined the Army and was gazetted to the Irish Guards in September. In January he went out to the Front, serving through that terrible winter of 1914-1915, and was severely wounded in the following May. From then until September he was in hospital, and there amused himself by journalism, writing for, amongst other papers, *Punch*, *The Manchester Guardian*, and *The Saturday Westminster*, articles which have since and quite recently been reprinted in a book called *The Starry Pool*. Captain Tallents' health made it impossible for him to continue his military career, and when sufficiently recovered he entered the Ministry of Munitions, then after a year returned to the Board of Trade, working again with Mr. Beveridge, but this time on matters concerning Food.

Captain Tallents has worked on Rationing, first with Sir Alfred Butt, then with Mr. F. P. Vivian, until now he is in charge of the Rationing Division of the Ministry of Food, assisted by Mrs. Pember Reeves as chief woman Rationing officer.



In the midst of the turmoil occasioned by the appointment of so many new officials and the departure of the Ministry proper to Palace Chambers, Mrs. Reeves and myself worked quietly on as best we might. Life at Grosvenor House was an "Alice in Wonderlandish" performance, for having with much trouble found the croquet ball, the hoop vanished, and having found the hoop and again picked up the ball the mallet disappeared. As for myself, I began to feel like an anxious, pains-taking little dog whose master throws stones into a muddy pond from which no matter how industriously the poor dog scrapes and scratches no stone can be disinterred. Becoming tired of this game of seek and not find I concluded that it would save trouble to say "Clever man, nice stone," as the stones splashed into the pond, and then to arrange my own work in my own fashion.

About this time Mrs. Reeves and I—"The Twins" as we were nicknamed in the Ministry for the excellent reason of course that no two women could have been less alike—moved from No. 3 on the Ground Floor to the Nurseries Nos. 18 and 19.

My co-Director and I, with Miss Bellis and Miss Lascelles, inhabited No. 18, a charming room overlooking the gardens, Miss Barrett, our organiser, and her staff being next door, an arrangement which was much more quiet and comfortable for



us all, though for various reasons we regretted our happy busy days in Clapham Junction.

Meanwhile at Palace Chambers there was great activity. Lord Rhondda was gaining the confidence of the people, chiefly by means of his admirable handling of his most valuable ally, the Press, and to a lesser extent by the kindly manner in which he dealt with the many deputations which waited upon him.

At the time that I write these words Lord Rhondda has been dead some months ; the man from whom those interested in the social welfare of this country hoped for so much has passed through the Gate of Death, leaving, as must we all in greater or lesser degree, an influence on those with whom he had been brought in contact and through them on others.

When Lord Rhondda became Food Controller he was well known and much respected in the political world and that of commerce, but he was not, I think, a man whose name was familiar to the general public. At the time of his death his name had become a household word, and he was regarded as a friend and benefactor by thousands of people who had never even seen him.

David Alfred Thomas was the son of Samuel Thomas of Ysguborwen, Aberdare, and senior in the firm of Thomas & Davey, coal agents. He was the grandson of a yeoman farmer, the son of a man

who started life as a grocer—a fact to which Lord Rhondda referred in a speech made shortly before he fell ill. He mentioned then that he owed his own position in life to his father's success as a grocer, which trade he practised until the age of fifty. But it was out of coal, not grocery, that Mr. Samuel Thomas made the money which enabled him to give his son a good education, first at a private school at Clifton, later at Caius College, Cambridge.

One of D. A. Thomas' oldest friends, the Rev. Arnold Thomas, conducting his funeral service, spoke of him thus :—

“ My memory goes back through many years to the days when he was a little boy, with his curly head and blue eyes and rosy cheeks, three or four years old, in his father's house at Ysguborwen, and later when he was living in Clifton for nine years, and attended the church which my father, after whom he had been named David, was the minister. He said once in those days, ‘ When I grow up I shall be a minister, but I shall have a much finer church than this. I shall have a church with marble pillars.’ That childish ambition was never gratified ; but if we mean by a ‘ minister ’ what we ought to mean—that is, a servant of the people—then indeed he became a minister, for he served the people nobly as he loved them truly and deeply. It was a great burden that was laid upon him when

he was invited to become Food Controller. Any man might have shrunk from such a task. He took a great risk, for he knew well that he would be shortening his life, which was unspeakably dear to him. Although he had many interests, loved his home and was devoted to his own people, thank God, without hesitation, knowing what it meant to take upon him this burden of heavy public care and responsibility, he did not hesitate, and we all know how well the work was done. He had many and great qualifications for the task. He had a genius for business, loved organising, and had an extraordinary command of detail. He wrote to me some years ago, when engaged in some of his big commercial transactions, in which he took much interest, 'I am enjoying myself immensely. I find business much more interesting than politics, and a great deal more honest.' He had other qualifications. He had a very deep sense of what was just and fair; he had an indomitable will; and he would at all costs do what he knew to be right and just. He said of himself (I have heard him say it in public) that he had a thick skin. That was not altogether true. Those who knew him best knew well how sensitive he was, how he loved to be praised, and how he shrank from blame and criticism. But whether men blamed him or praised him, he would do his duty. He had a wonderful way of dealing with men. Those who

were sometimes most strongly opposed to him nevertheless loved and trusted him. A Welsh woman, a neighbour of his, whose people belonged to Cardiff, told me only three or four days ago, than whenever there was any labour trouble : ‘ If D. A. Thomas would take it up, it would surely be put all right.’ Now there is one other thing that I venture to say. I do not think Lord Rhondda always had the reputation of being exactly a religious man. But he was deeply religious—religious to the core of his nature. I knew him well, when he was quite young ; I knew how he felt in those days about these things ; and during these last months he bore strong, clear and explicit testimony to the infinite value of religion. You will remember the last words of Sir Walter Scott : ‘ My dear boy, be religious. There is nothing like it when you come to lie as I am lying here.’ That is how Lord Rhondda felt, and now we are here at his grave and thank God that he had the courage and devotion, in spite of all that had passed, to serve the public so faithfully. Always he truly cared for the poor.”

At the University D. A. Thomas (or as he afterwards came to be known amongst the Welsh miners, “ D. A.”) did well both in study and in athletics, especially in rowing and boxing. Speaking of him to many men who knew him well and who had



worked with him, all agreed that one could wish for no better chief, for he possessed that rare power, the power of successful delegation. He would select his workers and then trust them.

The following is an extract from a private letter from Lord Rhondda to Major R. H. Carr, Assistant Secretary in charge of the Fish, Fruit, and Vegetables Division of the Ministry of Food, who has kindly permitted me to publish it. It shows Lord Rhondda's attitude towards his staff :—

“ I have for many years in business acted on the principle that to do things in a large way you must place confidence in your staff and give them very considerable latitude, letting them at the same time know they may rely upon your backing them up when trouble arises. A man who tries to do everything himself must necessarily be very limited in the amount of business he can undertake. You will get let down occasionally by trusting the wrong man, but on balance after many years' experience, I am sure my policy is a right one. I have been very lucky at the Ministry of Food and very fortunate in the selection of the more important members of my staff.”

In the course of my work in the Ministry I had several private interviews with Lord Rhondda, attended conferences at which he presided and also saw him on other occasions, and very naturally



studied him keenly and formed my own conclusions as to his character.

Lord Rhondda's personal charm and courtesy were great, but they did not conceal his force of will, his determination—that was evident in every line of his kindly face. A trait in his character which endeared him to almost every one was his sincere desire to help the poor; he had keen sympathy with the “under-dog” in life. There is no doubt that though he sometimes said of himself that he had a hide like a rhinoceros (he said it to me one day), Mr. Arnold Thomas was right in saying that this was not so. He was really, I think, a man who felt harsh criticism greatly, though he had the strength of mind to continue in a course in spite of that criticism and in spite of his dislike of it. No man with such qualities of heart and mind as Lord Rhondda possessed could be thick-skinned.

There is no doubt that his work weighed on him, and through that difficult autumn and early spring of 1917–1918 he was very much worried. The queue scandal distressed him—he could not bear to think of children and women waiting for hours in cold or wet to obtain food.

The sympathetic spirit showed by Lord Rhondda towards the poor proved him to be a man of imagination, for he had never personally known poverty. He also was greatly interested in the

welfare of children, hence his desire for a Ministry of Health.

In a conversation with the American Judge Neil, founder of the Mothers' Pensions Scheme, which took place at Palace Chambers in the Minister's large first-floor room overlooking the Houses of Parliament, the Food Controller used these words :

"In all my duties as Food Controller I think of the interests of the consumer, especially the poor consumer, and if I may put it in rather a picturesque way, a compassionate thought for the children enters into the psychology of my mind. Recently I submitted to our War Cabinet a scheme to ensure the supply of milk to children during this winter, so that I feel that my dreams are fulfilling themselves in unexpected ways.

"As soon as the War is over, the statesmen of Great Britain will bend their efforts towards saving the children from the ravages of early death (and perhaps, let us hope, the shadow of the threat of war will no longer be on the horizon of nations). My plan for a Ministry of Health, and your plan, Judge Neil, for Mothers' Pensions, will together see fulfilment."

Mr. D. A. Thomas married Miss Sybil Haig and had one daughter, who married Sir Humphrey Mackworth, and has now become Viscountess Rhondda. Lady Rhondda became a Director in the Ministry of National Service. It was when travel-

ling from America on the *Lusitania* that Lady Mackworth and her father went through the terrible experience of the sinking of that great ship by a torpedo on May 7th, 1915.

Sybil Viscountess Rhondda is well known as an indefatigable war worker and a most kind and sympathetic woman, and I am sure that she, like her husband, practised what they preached so thoroughly that they did harm to their health. The last time I saw Lord Rhondda was at the very end of February or beginning of March, 1918. He was sitting at his large desk, placed between the fireplace and the window of his room at Palace Chambers, and he at once rose and came forward in the quick welcoming fashion which was a marked characteristic, for he had in full measure that power of making his visitors feel welcome and of leaving them imbued with a feeling that whatever work they were called upon to do was work of importance in which he took a real interest.

I recollect that Lord Northcliffe once spoke of this quick, eager manner of Lord Rhondda's welcome. "He ran forward almost like a boy," were his words.

"Oh, Mrs. Peel—I have not seen you for a long time. Sit there," and he pointed to the leather-covered arm-chair placed near his table. While we were talking he leant on the table, his hands folded. But on the occasion of which I speak the

Minister looked tired, thin, and far older than his sixty-three years. Indeed in the weeks since I had last seen him he seemed to me to have changed greatly. He could not have been a strong man when he became Controller, for he had suffered severe attacks of rheumatic fever and of pneumonia, and the shock to a man of over sixty of the wreck of the *Lusitania* necessarily must have been great.

Speaking of a man known to us both, Lord Rhondda referred to him as "an old woman, a regular old woman—but a nice, kind old woman." Then lying back in his chair, he smiled: "but don't think I mean any disrespect of your sex by that, for there are old women of both sexes." There was something so attractive about his manner, his smile, that I could quite believe what some one on his staff once said of him to me: "He had such personal charm (added to a great brain) that I've seen him welcome a deputation, and having granted nothing that they came to ask, send them away so pleased with themselves and him that they swore by him ever after."

One of his business associates told me that he never wasted time in regretting mistakes. On one occasion this friend tried to dissuade him from a certain course. "Lord Rhondda was obstinate—yes, obstinate—so it had to go through. Later he saw he had been wrong, and said to me in his quick



but quiet way : ‘ You were right about that——’ and then he never mentioned it again.”

I have heard it said that in his early days Lord Rhondda had been disappointed that political preferment did not come to him. In an obituary notice which appeared in the *Chronicle* the writer said of him :—

“ It is a very serious reflection on the way in which Members of Parliament have found their way into Ministries in the past, that such a man should have sat in the House of Commons for twenty-five years, and not only never filled even an Under Secretaryship, but had never been offered a seat on any one of the House’s committees. Yet the years which he spent there were the best of his life ; and he gave so much time to its sittings that it was not until he left it that his career as a business man got fully under way.”

I recall that at my last interview I spoke of a project which had come to naught and caused me some disappointment. “ It was a good idea,” he said ; “ but never mind, we all have to bear disappointments—all of us.” Lord Rhondda had a great understanding of humanity and realised what perhaps Lord Devonport did not realise, that the Food Controller must be a friend of the people ; that he must take them into his confidence ; must show them why they were called upon to make changes in their habits, even to suffer inconveni-

ences. It was not enough to issue orders—the people must understand the reasons which made these orders necessary; appeal must be made to their goodwill. Lord Rhondda knew what I think I may say without conceit, Mrs. Reeves and myself had realised from the first: that the success of any system of Food Control must rest upon the goodwill of the people.

Mr. Wintour, who had known Lord Rhondda so well, said of him just what other men who knew him well have told me—that his power of deputation, of extracting the best work and at the same time obtaining the affection of those who worked with him, was one of his greatest assets.

It was early in April that the Minister fell seriously ill—towards the end of that month he offered his resignation to the Prime Minister, but strong pressure was exerted to persuade him to retain his office. On or about May 20th it seemed that his health was improving. I saw Lady Rhondda about that time, and she then told me how hard he worked. Often at night and in the early morning hours his light would be turned on, and she would find him at work. I thought then of the kind-hearted little girl at one of my children's meetings who grieved for "poor Lord Rhondda sitting up all night writing them sugar cards."

On June 3rd the King conferred upon him the honour of a Viscountcy, and on July 3rd he died.

Of all the notices of his death none, I think, was more sympathetic than that which appeared in the *Daily Mail* of July 4th :—

“ Lord Rhondda’s death will be mourned in every British home. The public work of no other Minister of State has ever so intimately affected domestic hearths as the great work of the Food Minister, to whose courage, devotion, and administrative genius millions of homes owe their present assurance of daily bread.

“ In securing the British people’s food supply, and in the infinite task of sharing it out to all alike, Lord Rhondda spent himself mercilessly. He has died for his country as truly as any soldier on the field of battle. While he was fighting food-profiters and food-grabbers he was also fighting his own increasing ill-health, but he held on gallantly until his work was done and his great machinery smoothly running. Had he left his work sooner or taken it more lightly he would undoubtedly have lived longer. His family may be assured of his country’s gratitude.”

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE SECOND VOLUNTARY ECONOMY CAMPAIGN

Sir Arthur Yapp—The League of National Safety—A large post—Voluntary and compulsory rationing—A difficult time—Lord Rhondda and Sir Arthur are accused of hoarding tea and bacon—In prison—Hoarding—Queues—At Southampton—The Dockyard—The War Office—The Admiralty—The Ministry of Shipping and the pond in the Park.

A FEATURE of the autumn of 1917 was the second Food Economy campaign, under the directorship of Sir Arthur Yapp.

Sir Arthur is a tall, large man who wears eye-glasses and always appears placid and good-tempered and sometimes very absent-minded. He has completed over thirty years' service in the Y.M.C.A., and raised more than one million pounds for the war work of that organisation—a task which he may well be proud to have accomplished.

It was Sir Arthur who introduced the League of National Safety of which Lady Hunter became President and Miss Beeman, well known in connection with Queen Alexandra's Rose Days, the organiser.

Apropos of this league I once procured some figures which give an idea of the labour necessi-



tated by the vast correspondence which the organisation of such a league would entail :—

To send out 5,000,000 cards in three months would take a staff of well over 300, working eight hours daily to card and address envelopes, 400 messengers to stamp and arrange for postage, and 50 clerks to index.

To send out about 100,000 letters a day would require 50 postmen to deliver or rather 50 bags to take away.

To open the applications would require 30 clerks working all day.

Imagine then the magnitude of the task which confronted the Ministry of Food in dealing with food cards for some forty millions of people.

Had this League of National Safety been started in the early days of the Food Economy campaign it might have met with success, but it came too late.

Interest in Voluntary Economy had been allowed to dwindle. Several speeches had been made which gave the public the impression that the necessity for economy was at an end, which certainly was not the case as the lean months which followed were to prove.

I do not hesitate to say that in my opinion (and having travelled all over England and been in touch with persons of all classes I was in a position

to form a reliable opinion) a great mistake was made in permitting the scheme of educational propaganda which had been put in motion to collapse for want of central organisation and support, for, as I have said elsewhere, by means of this propaganda the Government could have combined the teaching of war aims and thrift in general with that of food values and good and economical cooking—a better understanding of which was sadly needed no matter whether voluntary or compulsory rationing was in force. But in spite of the manner in which the Voluntary Economy campaign was checked, good was to come of it.

All through the autumn and up to the summer of 1918 feeling ran high on food questions, and the Economy speakers did good work in soothing the public, in helping them realise the difficulties of the situation, which were many, and inducing them to believe that the Ministry of Food was not an inhuman monster trying to hoard food, but that it was a great organisation controlled by a man possessed of great sympathy for the people and a desire to do his very best for them.

Scarcely ever was an Economy speaker heckled with regard to the Voluntary campaign. The scoldings we endured were brought down upon our devoted heads by bad distribution of food, the queue system, and high prices—matters which concerned the Ministry proper, and not the

Economy Section, and also by the attitude of the War Cabinet towards racing and the drink question. It was only in the early part of the campaign, and then I think because injudicious people had talked and written far too much about the wastefulness of the poor and the working classes instead of the wastefulness of *all* classes, and because the public failed to realise that throwing away food is not the only kind of waste, but that it may be wasted by bad cooking, improper cooking, and careless eating, that we met with any antagonism. When it was realised that we came not to criticise, but merely to explain the position and then to try and find out in what way we could help people to deal best with the food at their disposal, and that we had a real sympathy with their troubles, we were accorded the kindest reception.

Sir Arthur accepted the position of Director of Voluntary Food Economy at the invitation of Lord Rhondda, backed by a letter from the Prime Minister, who asked him to undertake a six months' campaign, and if he failed in an impossible task (had he possessed more knowledge of the situation I wonder if he would ever have undertaken it ?) he did not fail in other respects, as those who attended his meetings can testify.

For some reason he did not find favour with the London Press, who seemed to take a delight in

reporting him in a manner which gave a wrong impression of the result of his speeches. The provincial Press was more just to him.

I have never understood why it was decided to delay so long before putting the nation on compulsory rations. Sometimes I have wondered if the War Cabinet (as happened in the end) desired to force the people to demand compulsion, feeling that they would then be able to say, "You asked for it, you've got it, and now don't grumble."

It would seem that the War Cabinet was afraid of the measure and indeed the results of compulsory food control in other countries was not encouraging. They had to consider that Control might be badly received, and that it must be an expensive affair and one which would absorb the labour of a large number of men and women, but travelling about the country as I did, addressing audiences of every kind, it seemed to me that the Cabinet waited dangerously long before putting compulsory rationing into effect. Possibly in the end the fact that affairs had come to such a pitch that the country (as it has done before) governed its Government was all for the best, but in delaying the imposition of a compulsory system I cannot but think that the Government showed a lack of understanding of the temper of the public.

Some time since I was talking of this with the editor of one of our daily papers and I with



the boldness of ignorance ventured to suggest that the Government, good as it is (and I for one feel convinced that as things are we could have had no better Government), has showed itself wrong time and again in its judgment of the people. "You are right," said he, "in my opinion absolutely right. The Press must keep its fingers on the public pulse: the Government should do like wise, and yet I, like you, do not hesitate to say that in their reading of the psychology of the public mind over and over again they have gone astray."

"The Government does not depend sufficiently upon the common sense and goodwill of the people," was another criticism made by a well-known man, and some words of Sir Charles Bathurst seem to bear this out. "Provided they, the people," he said to me one day, "believe that there is equity between the classes they are capable of great discipline and greater patriotism than the people of any other country."

I note that Mr. Hoover also said exactly the same of the people of his country!

Talking later with Sir Arthur Yapp of the happenings of those months during which he addressed audiences of every sort and kind, he told me how impressed he too had been with the British workers' demand for justice.

So angry was the feeling at this time that Sir

Arthur was warned that it would be wiser not to attempt to address meetings in the great industrial centres. Undeterred by these warnings he fulfilled his engagements, to find his audiences both pleasant and reasonable, though they did scold him for his extravagance in wearing white starched collars! Now and then silly accusations were made against him, such as that while preaching economy he had obtained two sides of bacon for his private consumption: a piece of scandal for which the author later on had the good feeling to make voluntary apology.

Much about the same time Lord Rhondda was accused of hoarding tea, the tea in question being required for the hospital which he maintained at his own house in Wales.

Mrs. Reeves and myself sometimes accompanied Sir Arthur to speak. I remember especially a huge meeting which took place at Harrods', and another at the well-known Strand house of W. H. Smith and Sons. I had spoken at Messrs. Smith's printing works on the other side of the river a few days previously. On this occasion the partners invited Sir Arthur and myself to lunch and regaled us upon a particularly delicious war-time meatless dish. Messrs. Smith have done a great work through their huge organisation in encouraging both money and food saving.

It was during this second Economy campaign

that Mrs. Reeves spoke in some women's prisons. I asked permission to go with her to one of these meetings and the experience is not one which I shall soon forget. The audience consisted almost entirely of youngish women and quite young girls, several of them lovely fresh-looking creatures. What were they? For the most part prostitutes and petty thieves. They filed into the clean bare room in silence clad in ugly caps and shapeless dresses. Tall, well set-up women warders in dark blue uniform, keys chained to their neat waists, marshalled them to their seats. Some of the prisoners were most evidently mentally deficient, a few seemed sly or brazen, but for the most part they looked as other women look.

In that prison there were girls still in their teens suffering alone punishment for a dual act, while others had been arrested for solicitation. Are there in prisons men being punished for a like offence?

It is high time that we faced the problem of prostitution honestly. If it is true (and I quote the words of Mr. Macpherson, Under Secretary for War, words which I fancy will be quoted and re-quoted for many a year to come, as have been those of the Member of the House of Commons who spoke of Florence Nightingale as a "shameless hussy") that "it is not such a bad thing to have certain houses in which women are registered and

kept clean," if it is impossible that men should live a celibate life until they are able to marry or if it is inadvisable that they shall do so, then it follows logically that the women who minister to their needs are good citizens. Let us cease to speak of houses of ill-fame, of *maisons tolérées*. Let us term them instead houses of good health—*maisons recommandées*. Such terms as prostitute, unfortunate, street walker must no longer be used to denote women who are doing a service to the nation, and seeing that the health of the woman in a *maison tolérée* can endure but for a few years, the female inmates of such places might well be known as martyrs in a just cause. But if prostitution is anti-social, if it is a degradation so great that women prostitutes are classed as outcasts, then let us cease to cultivate an intolerable hypocrisy which permits the punishment of one sex for the sins of both.

I have seen enough of life in its saddest phases to realise that woman is not always the injured innocent, but if man sins because of his humanity woman sins for a like cause *plus* in many a case economic pressure. The girl as well as the young man craves for amusement and her amusements cost no less than his. Only too often her wage is such that she must depend for all but the barest subsistence on the generosity of some man. So man, secure from social punishment, buys



in some way or another what woman at great risk has to sell. It is because educated, decent women secure from poverty have lived in a little world of their own, eyes and ears shut to "unpleasant subjects," that so little has been done to obtain justice for "fallen" women.

It is perhaps for the same reason that prisons such as we know them still exist, and that by the conditions of life which we tolerate the inmates of those prisons are manufactured.

Reviewing in retrospect the events of this autumn and winter the words hoarding and queue flash across my brain. There certainly was a considerable amount of hoarding, and the idea that people with money at their disposal could stock their storerooms with food naturally infuriated the poor who were forced to live from hand to mouth. This hoarding was an unpatriotic act, but a moral rather than an actual danger, for had a real food shortage come upon us these stores would have been commandeered without the smallest compunction. The queue scandal was of far more importance than the hoarding scandal. I have vivid memories of bitterly cold wet days during that winter, of dismal dirty streets and those shabby depressed-looking shops common to the mean streets in the poor districts of all great towns. In rain and sleet, in bitter winds, in snow, women and children waited, women with shawls

over their heads, carrying baskets and babies—some fat and well-looking as babies should be, others with pinched monkeyish faces—women who shifted their living burdens from one arm to another to ease their aching—women with their hair arranged in row after row of metal curlers—women in capes and men's caps—little down at heel children clutching baskets, fish basses, bags made of string or American cloth. Often in spite of cold and weariness there was a flow of wit and humour, and sometimes a later comer would try and sneak in at the head of the line and then would come trouble promptly allayed by the large policeman who kept law and order in these strange gatherings.

The queues were a very real hardship, and it was little wonder that the poor resented them bitterly, knowing as they did that the rich escaped this experience.

Sometimes this long waiting for food might have been avoided had people been willing to adopt a different diet : I have seen a long line of women waiting outside a butcher's shop when the next-door shop, a fishmonger's, was full of fish and empty of customers.

"Why wait hours to get meat?" I asked a woman once, "when you could get fish without waiting?"

"My 'usbin 'e wouldn't eat fish for 'is *dinner*,"

was the reply made in a tone which would not have surprised me had I suggested a diet of rattlesnake. On another occasion when I asked the same question a lady looked at me with kindly tolerance. "An' get a black eye for me pains," she cheerfully observed.

It was the queues which forced local authorities to adopt rationing schemes, one of the first cities to do so being Birmingham.

The conduct of the tradespeople at this time who shut their shops to the general public and sent out meat and other goods to favoured customers *via* the back-door infuriated the people, and occasionally luckless butcher boys were held up and the contents of their basket looted. In some places owing to a suddenly and greatly increased population food difficulties were greater than in others where the numbers remained normal. Southampton was one of the towns which had to receive a large number of extra workers.

I went with Sir Arthur Yapp to a great Labour meeting in the drill hall at Southampton. This meeting certainly was a triumph for him, for there was great dissatisfaction then in Southampton, not only amongst the dockyard workers but in the town. We were fortunate in having an admirable chairman in the Mayor. It was very cold in the drill hall and there were no seats. The audience stood for something like  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours, and having

arrived angry, dissatisfied, spoiling for a fight in fact, they went out like lambs shaking hands with the speaker when they could get hold of him and clamouring for the little anchor badges of the National League of Safety. Sir Arthur's courteous manner, his patience in dealing with interruptions and in answering questions made a very good impression.

Sir Arthur went on to Portsmouth after the Southampton meeting, but I remained to visit the dockyard and to see if anything could be done with regard to the food of the men who worked therein. I visited the dockyard in the company of the Mayor and Labour Party representative. It poured with rain the whole of the time, and we splashed about dismally in the mud. Southampton Dockyard on a cold rainy day is only surpassed by Woolwich Arsenal in similar weather. Ultimately Mrs. King, who was in charge of a small and excellent canteen run for the benefit of the gun-repairing shop, most kindly had me mopped up, my shoes dried, and gave me food. I had some talk with the Mayor of Southampton and with Mr. Dudley Ward, the Member, and later again with Sir Arthur, who desired me to see if I could take the matter of these dockyard canteens further. This necessitated a visit to the War Office, possibly one to the Admiralty, and as I had no fancy for spending the remainder of my days



running from one to the other I went to see one of Mr. Lloyd George's secretaries, who inhabited one of a series of rabbit-hutch-like buildings erected at the back of Downing Street, and he kindly telephoned to the department which he thought would deal with the matter, asking that a messenger might be waiting to conduct me thither, that I might be seen without delay, and that should it be necessary for me to obtain an interview in the Admiralty or elsewhere my path should be made smooth. The kind secretary bade a messenger let me out by a back-door and point out my path.

It was on one of those hot days which sometimes occur in autumn that I trudged along to the War Office. The War Office was sympathetic. It admitted that it had some connection with the dockyard, but opined that the Admiralty was the person who should be approached, so to the Admiralty I went. The Admiralty too was kind. It also admitted that such a place as Southampton Dockyard did exist, but was inclined to think that the Ministry of Shipping was the authority who should deal with the matter. This interview in the Admiralty happening after my experience of the sailor who had shared my chicken leg and left me in the lurch I didn't like sailors very much at that moment, and when the Admiralty advised me to visit the Ministry of Shipping I said rather

peevishly : “ Where *is* the Ministry of Shipping ? ” The Admiralty looked at me patiently. “ In the pond in the park,” it replied, and there was a hint of “ and surely you might have known that, silly-billy ” about its voice. But do you think I should have known by the light of nature that a Ministry of Shipping would live in a pond in a park ?

As I said before, it was hot and the paths of the park were very gravelly and dusty, and by the time I approached the Ministry of Shipping, which surely enough was in the pond, I was quite sorry that I had to reach it by a bridge over a dusty hollow where a pond had been instead of wading or swimming to it through the cooling waters of a real pond.

I don't know why, but the Commissionaire at the door of that Ministry thought I was a very suspicious person ; he didn't like the look of me at all and wanted to bring other people to inspect me, but I thwarted him by telling him that my arrival had already been proclaimed by telephone from another high personage to his high personage and that he must conduct me thither without delay.

The Ministry of Shipping was a charming person with grey hair, blue eyes, and blue uniform, but he was not in the least interested in Southampton Dockyard. Indeed I do not believe that he ever wanted to hear its name again, and what he *did* want to do was to talk about the difficulties which

his wife had in buying food. He said it was *terrible*; she spent the whole of her days trying to buy food for the family, and she wasn't strong and she couldn't go on doing it, and really I must see that there should be a National Kitchen installed within convenient reach of her residence. It was only by promising—quite falsely, as I could not do anything of the kind—that Mrs. Ministry of Shipping should have a National Kitchen that I induced him to talk about Southampton Dockyard. In the end he said it really was not the Ministry of Shipping but the Admiralty who must deal with the matter, so obedient to the call of duty, hopeless and hot, I made my way back to the Admiralty. The Admiralty was again charming and sympathetic, but thought that perhaps the London and South Western Railway—"No," I said firmly, "neither to the Ministry of Shipping nor to the War Office, nor to any railway, but only to you yourself will I talk about Southampton Dockyard, and here I will sit until you assure me either that nothing can be done, or that something shall be done." Panting for me to depart, the Admiralty hastily assured me that something *should* be done.

I left the Ministry of Food five months later but it had not been done then. Faith may move mountains but I doubt if it could stir three Government Departments plus a railway into concerted action!

I would that more employers realised that apart from the right and wrong of the matter, the best work can never be obtained from men working under such conditions as regards their food as I observed in those days both at Southampton Dockyard and in some parts of Woolwich Arsenal. I say in those days because it is possible that the same conditions do not still exist.



## CHAPTER IX

### NATIONAL KITCHENS

A sketch-history of the National Kitchen Movement—Lady Askwith and the Rev. B. Gregory—The Queen and Princess Christian—The Salvation Army—The Hammersmith Kitchen—The Queen opens the Ministry Experimental Public Kitchen—Why Kitchens are needed—Mr. F. W. Spencer, Director of National Kitchens—Women in National Kitchen work—Kitchens in Germany and in France—Bad policy.

OF all the work that Mrs. Reeves and I did at the Ministry of Food none interested me more than that which concerned National, or as they were then generally called, Public Kitchens. Any scheme tending to ease the lives of hard-working women of all classes appeals to me, and it was for this reason and not merely because such Kitchens might prove necessary War measures, that I did what I could to advance the movement. So hopeful was I that these Kitchens would prove of lasting benefit to the nation that I kept detailed notes of the organisation of the Ministry Kitchen, and descriptions of many of the Kitchens which I visited, thinking that one day they might become of some importance in the history of social welfare work.

It was on March 2nd, the day after our appointment, that, seated in lonely state in our ballroom (for we had then no staff), we discussed Kitchens. Previous to this Dr. Marion Phillips had written one or two articles on the subject, and the Women's Labour League had held a meeting at Caxton Hall and carried a resolution in favour of the organisation of Kitchens run by local authorities under Government control. Dr. Marion Phillips came to see Mrs. Reeves on March 2nd and a little later lunched with us at the Ladies' Empire Club to discuss the question further. Mrs. Reeves also saw Miss Mary MacArthur with reference to the Kitchens and we quickly came to the conclusion that it would be wise to organise a Government Experimental Public Kitchen.

Without loss of time we put the matter before Sir Henry Rew and also before the National War Savings Committee at one of the combined conferences which they held with officials of the Food Ministry, and later, on our suggestion, the scheme was incorporated in the War Savings Circular to Local Authorities. Lord Devonport promptly gave his consent to the opening of an Experimental Government Public Kitchen and Mrs. Reeves and myself were empowered to appoint an Advisory Committee.

Sir Henry's instructions were that we should proceed without delay, and by the help of an

extraordinarily hard-working Committee this Kitchen was opened at 104a Westminster Bridge Road by Her Majesty the Queen on May 21st, 1917.

Before it was suggested by myself and my co-director that an Experimental Public Kitchen should be organised, the National War Savings Committee had been collecting information regarding Public Kitchens in general, and Miss Kate Manly, who afterwards came to work in the Ministry of Food, had drawn up a report for them.

After the resignation of Lord Devonport, Lord Rhondda decided that the Ministry would undertake their own propaganda and Food Economy work, and therefore a National Kitchen section was set up in the Ministry, and the War Savings Committee ceased to concern themselves further with the matter.

At that time neither Mrs. Reeves nor myself were acquainted with Miss Manly, neither did we know of her report. Great minds think alike, however, for when we came to compare these two reports the policy advised in them was almost identical and it is that which to some extent has since been adopted.

Were it possible to see the end of any undertaking while yet at its beginning, I should never have made use of the word "Kitchen," and, indeed, very early in the day I began to substitute the

words "shops for the sale of cooked food" for "Public Kitchens," for further experience strengthens me in the opinion that the public needs shops open throughout the day for the sale of cooked food which may be eaten cold or which is of a kind such as can be re-heated without detriment, and at certain hours for the sale of hot foods, but certainly not Kitchens as we know them. The use of baths and town halls and similar temporary premises is, from my point of view, a mistake. Of unpaid helpers I also disapprove, for if the "ready-to-eat" food industry is to flourish it must be run upon sound commercial lines.

While we in the Ministry were working away at the organisation of the Westminster Bridge Road Kitchen, a letter appeared in the *Morning Post* of March 27th signed by Lady Askwith and the Rev. B. Gregory, drawing attention to the rise in the price of food, the increasing need for women's work outside their own homes, and suggesting that some Kitchens in the East End should shortly open. This letter caused considerable comment in the Press; subscriptions were sent in and on April 4th two Kitchens were opened. I remember that I went with Lady Askwith to fetch Mrs. Lloyd George, and she, Mrs. Page (the wife of the United States Ambassador), Lady Askwith and myself went down to the opening of the "Paddy's Goose" Kitchen. Later a committee was formed



of which Princess Christian was the president. Other Kitchens were opened, one by Princess Christian, another by Lady Beatty.

On June 27th I went with Princess Christian and Lady Askwith to the opening of the Stepney Central Hall Kitchen. The Queen and Princess Mary visited this kitchen that same day, Princess Christian as President of the Communal Kitchens Committee receiving them.

I remember so well when the Queen was serving at the counter that an old woman presented to her in the most friendly fashion two pink rosebuds out of her own garden.

Another customer was a little girl in deep mourning, whose mother had shortly before been killed in one of the East End air raids. The Queen on that day had a long talk with a customer who had helped in the making of some garment of historic interest, but whether it was the weaving of the material used for Her Majesty's wedding dress or some item of the Prince of Wales' layette I cannot now recall.

After the opening of these Kitchens letters poured in from every part of the country, and hundreds of visitors came to inspect the Kitchens. A Committee was formed of representatives of various boroughs and of private persons who wished to start Kitchens. Mrs. Earle, who had worked on Kitchens for the National War Savings

Committee, became the secretary and the meetings were held at Lady Askwith's house. This Committee, I believe, was in touch with the War Savings Committee, but afterwards continued its work independently. Some of these Kitchens are still in existence and those who organised them did good work as pioneers of a movement which, because it was new, as well as for other and more adequate reasons, met with a considerable amount of hostility.

While Lady Askwith, Mr. Gregory, and others were establishing their Kitchens the Salvation Army were also at work and now have Kitchens all over the country. I several times saw Colonel Laurie and Commissioner Adelaide Cox, visited some of the Kitchens and went with Lady Rhondda to open a new Kitchen in the East End.

The work of the Salvation Army impressed me greatly; there was something specially pleasing about the manner of the workers towards those for whom they strove. At the Kitchen which Lady Rhondda opened the good-fellowship with, and trust of the rough-looking people who crowded into the room for the Salvation Army officers was evident.

I can remember when I was a child the first visit which the Salvation Army paid to my grandfather's village. I say my grandfather's village, for that was how he regarded it, and, according to his

lights and theirs, fairly and kindly did he deal with his flock. That meeting was peaceful but in many another place the preachers were pelted with garbage, while the Church, coldly aloof, regarded the lively methods of the Salvationists with disgust.

There are many ladders by which we can climb to Heaven, and what matters which we choose if we come there in the end ?

Another pioneer in National Kitchen work was the Mayor of Hammersmith, Alderman H. Foreman. An Experimental Kitchen was opened in this borough on May 1st, 1917, and a far larger Kitchen on September 1st, 1917. I visited the Kitchen several times, the Town Clerk, Mr. Leslie Gordon, being most kind in affording me any information I might require.

It was on May 21st that the Westminster Bridge Road Kitchen was opened by Her Majesty the Queen, accompanied by Princess Mary ; Lady Ampthill and Sir Edmund Wallington were in attendance.

The Queen and the Princess spent some time watching the white-capped and aproned servers, and then set to work and busily served the customers themselves, talking with them in friendly fashion. The Queen was quite agitated by one minute child who seemed in imminent danger of dropping a plateful of scalding rice pudding on to the top of its own head. In those

days people had not learned the art of buying their dinners at Public Kitchens and many of them omitted to bring any kind of receptacle and rushed home again, arriving purple and panting with a jug or basin in order that they should not be too late to be served by the Queen. One old man managed to pack a surprising variety of foods into a newspaper. Cornflour and rhubarb jelly was one of the sweets of the day, and a supply of these had been put ready on a lower shelf of a serving-table. The enterprising and social yellow dog which attends all functions from race to missionary meetings naturally decided to attend the opening of the Westminster Bridge Kitchen, and I discovered him, having dodged through a compact mass of legs and squeezed himself behind the counter, sitting licking a pink mould with the greatest appreciation. And I now confess that in spite of the fact that I was, as people used to call me, a lady Food Controller, I did not interfere. He liked that pudding so much and he didn't look as if puddings often came his way. Presently one of the servers came and shoo'd him off, but I noticed that she did not remove the pudding. I meant to have done so but just at that moment the Queen took her departure and I had to attend to other matters. I often wondered who ate that pudding, because the yellow dog had licked it very neatly and it still looked quite shapely and shining !



While the Queen was ladling out rice pudding a very old man ambled up and bought meat, vegetables, and pudding, which he proceeded to place all together on a very dirty plate and cover with a still dirtier piece of newspaper. This evidently distressed the Queen. He then shambled out, never having realised that it was Her Majesty who had served him. This fact apparently was explained to him by the crowd outside, for shortly afterwards he returned, took up his position in front of the Queen, and solemnly waved his hat three times at her.

Her Majesty was very thorough in her tour of investigation and visited the basement where the stores were kept and looked into the various bins. "What's that?" she asked. "Maize," said Princess Mary at once, who appeared to be well versed in housewifely knowledge.

It fell to my lot to speak and to write about the Kitchen movement and to attend a considerable number of conferences regarding them. The editor of *The Times* kindly allows me to republish in these pages an article which I wrote for that paper. I see no reason to depart from the opinions which I then expressed.

"The utility of Public Kitchens and the reason why these institutions are approved by the Food Controller are not yet properly understood, and the suggestion that eventually they may prove one of the greatest national benefits meets with

incredulity. The immediate reasons which have caused the Food Controller to advise local authorities to organise Public Kitchens are as follows :—

(1) To save food ; (2) to save fuel ; (3) to save labour ; (4) to enable persons who cannot cook at home to obtain nourishing food, hot or cold.

Must not these reasons apply as well in peace as in war ? Is there ever any object in wasting food or fuel or labour ? Are there not always many people who cannot conveniently cook at home ? A fifth reason, and one of great importance, is that the general adoption of Public Kitchens would often make life in working-class homes healthier and more mentally endurable. Living in overcrowded rooms is harmful, physically and morally ; and the cook often possesses neither the skill nor the implements to make the best use of the food she buys. Far more food is wasted by bad and unsuitable keeping and cooking than by being thrown away.

Equally beneficial would Public Kitchens be to the middle and lower middle classes, who are often obliged to live in highly rented but cramped quarters or in houses which are cheap only because they are appallingly inconvenient. Frequently, too, both in poor households and in those of persons of larger income, a servant must be kept because the mistress cannot do all the housework and look after the children as well. Were she free

from cookery the money spent on the maid could be saved or spent on education or amusement, and the family would be better fed than when dependent on an incompetent maid-of-all-work or an overworked, and therefore incompetent, mistress.

Almost any woman of average intelligence can learn to cook fairly well, if she can be taught the principles, but some women will never cook well, and many detest cooking. The talent for cooking is not innate in women, and there is nothing to be gained by condemning a woman whose abilities lie elsewhere to be an inferior cook. The object of cookery is health, not discipline.

#### POPULAR PREJUDICE

At a recent conference of civic male personages, at which Public Kitchens were discussed, an extraordinary ignorance of the reasons for which they are needed in war time and in peace time, and, indeed, an extraordinary ignorance of human nature was shown. It was thought that Public Kitchens were to be inflicted upon the poor as some kind of punishment for a crime unstated. "You have no right to make poor people go to Public Kitchens unless you make the rich go to them too." The sentiment was applauded. But there is no question of making anyone go to

Public Kitchens, and at present it is the well-to-do who use such institutions more perhaps than the poor, for what, after all, are the cooked provision departments in large shops but Public Kitchens, though Kitchens so costly that only the well-to-do can patronise them? At eight of these shops recently visited the tale was the same—increasing demand in spite of prices so high that no middle-class mother could feed her family there. Again, in London and elsewhere the rich can use another form of Public Kitchen—the restaurant belonging to flats or chambers. But none but the rich can pay the rent of these living-places.

Even before the War, the difficulty of obtaining servants, and, above all, a skilful and economical cook, was great, and the expenditure on wages of a wasteful person, on the rent and upkeep of a kitchen, on fuel, and on cleaning materials must have been gigantic. But, according to prejudice, this misuse of energy and material must continue because otherwise “women would be idle,” and because not to cook food where it is to be eaten would entail “a serious menace to the sacredness of family life.” But jam is rarely made in town homes, sardines are tinned by a company, and cooked ham is sold by the provision dealer. Why, then, must beefsteak, potatoes, or milk pudding be treated quite differently? Is their composition such that they can



only be cooked at home ? The truth is that change is necessary. The War is teaching us that if human beings are to work at their best their mental and physical conditions must be as good as possible. Miserable dwelling-places, foul air, long hours of labour, labour made harder than is necessary, defeat their object, both in the world of industry and in the universal industry of keeping house and bearing and rearing children.

The Public Kitchen (an institution which should bear no relationship whatsoever to the charity soup kitchen), in which food is prepared with scrupulous cleanliness, cooked with scientific knowledge, and sold at such prices as the customers can afford to pay, cannot fail to prove of inestimable benefit.

Had the opponents of National Kitchens objected to them on the sensible grounds that it is by no means easy to make them pay, and that naturally neither municipalities nor private persons wish to be saddled with organisations which are financially unsound, and also that the public is not yet convinced of their utility, I should have lent a more sympathetic ear to their complaints, but the opposition was generally of an unintelligent order and came chiefly from men, who not having to drudge in a kitchen themselves have no sympathy with the lot of the woman who does.

It should not be impossible to run a Kitchen

which would pay its way provided that the customers patronising it were sufficient in number and able to afford a reasonable price for the food, but the Kitchen in a poor neighbourhood is quite another proposition. Quoting from an article I wrote for the Xmas No. of the *Graphic* I dealt with that point in the following words :—

“Suitable premises, suitable plant, and, above all, a highly skilled staff, cost money. Now, speaking generally, the poor customer is in the position that she (for the customer is of course in nearly all cases the housekeeper) cannot afford to buy if the cooked food costs more than she would pay were it uncooked, plus, perhaps, the cost of the fuel she would use to cook it. The fact that she has to be out at work all day, and is obliged to cook and clean as best she may before and after the day's work, does not weigh with her. She cannot afford the luxury of, so to speak, ‘keeping a cook.’ She will patronise the Public Kitchen only if she considers that it pays her to do so from the monetary point of view. Thus, if the kitchen is to be of use to those people who need it most, the food must be sold at prices which they will pay, and, in my opinion, this one fact puts the small Public Kitchen out of court in a poor neighbourhood. It is only by skilled buying in large quantities, by skilled cooking in large quantities, by the saving

of staff and fuel which may be made when handling large quantities, that food can be produced sufficiently cheaply to meet the wants of the less well-paid among the working-classes."

After the opening of the Kitchen on the 21st May, owing to various reasons, practically nothing was done in the Ministry to advance matters until in the late autumn Lord Rhondda appointed Alderman F. W. Spencer, Director of National Kitchens—a delay exasperating to those people, of whom there were many, who wished to start Kitchens so that they might be in running order during the winter.

Mr. Spencer is a man from the North, hailing from Halifax. He is still a young man, abounding in energy which is expressed in his manner and every movement, and he, like many other of his fellow-men whose brains have helped to build up the Ministry of Food, has been to a great extent the architect of his own fortunes.

As a youth he entered the accountant's office of the Halifax Corporation and set himself to learn all that there was to learn. He took an accountancy course in the Technical Schools and at the end of twelve months was teaching accountancy at 30s. an evening lesson. Every Saturday he went over to Manchester to take a course of legal study, and in the afternoon departed to Leeds to study at the Training College there,

while on Sunday he employed himself in writing essays. Certainly this young man did not let the grass grow under his feet.

At twenty-three he went into business for himself, being keenly interested in the financing and organisation of industry, and eventually came to control various large undertakings in the management of some of which he became connected with Lord Rhondda.

It is Mr. Spencer's theory that in a highly organised business those in control of it should be able to know month by month exactly how they stand, and not depend, as is so often the case, on a half-yearly or quarterly statement, and this plan he adopts in the accountancy department of the National Kitchens Section.

Mr. Spencer ultimately became a member of the Halifax Town Council, which, by the by, gave him some insight into the art of debating which he now finds useful. At that time the tramways were doing badly, also the electric works, and Mr. Spencer set himself to put these on a better footing. Prior to the War he had travelled much in Germany, studying the industrial organisation of that country.

I remember having a long talk with him with regard to the industrial conditions of our own nation, and we found ourselves in agreement as to the necessity for high wages and greater pro-



duction, which Mr. Spencer declares might be achieved to a great extent by the elimination of waste. He declares that this country could live on its waste, that there is far too low a productive power per man and per machine. We need, he says, cheaper electric power and still more labour-saving devices ; even at the present time there is far too much unproductive labour. Everything has a use in the economic machine, but as yet we have by no means always found the right use or even any use for various articles, and even the little that I have seen of the world of industry leads me to think that his words are true.

I spoke with Mr. Spencer of the conditions under which some women still worked in factories, of the 12-hour shift (which is, as a rule, nominally twelve and practically  $11\frac{1}{2}$  hours) and the time wasted during the last hours of work owing to the fatigue of the worker. "It is wrong," said Mr. Spencer ; "short hours, good pay, good conditions of labour, good housing, attractive surroundings—those are what we must aim at, and better education also there must be. We have to become a great nation of producers."

But if we are to become a great nation of producers we cannot afford to release vast numbers of women who are now doing productive work to go back and muddle along at domestic work. Personally I am strongly of the opinion that by

reorganisation of our methods of living we can obtain better results, and yet leave many women free for professional, social, and industrial work, enabling those who remain in the domestic industry either as mistresses of homes or as paid helpers to carry out their duties with a lesser sacrifice of time and energy.

After I left the Ministry Mr. Spencer was kind enough to keep me in touch with National Kitchen matters. It was at his invitation that I visited the Poplar Kitchen and found it a pleasing sight, clean, light, airy, the food hot and well served.

Mr. Spencer, however, has gone further than in the early days of the movement we had thought advisable, for he has added National Restaurants to the National Kitchen programme. It will be extremely interesting to see how this essay in State trading develops.

At Poplar there were delightful little parties of children of quite tender years dining at the Restaurant—children who in all probability until the coming of the National Kitchen and National Restaurant would have made their midday meal off a slice of bread and jam, or bread and margarine, or, as the supply of fats and jams became limited, of dry bread, not because there was not money with which to buy food, but because no one can be in two places at once, and women cannot obey the call of their country and go into War work

and at the same time stay at home and cook the children's dinner.

I went over the premises of the National Restaurant in New Bridge Street with Mr. Spencer and lunched there on the occasion when he entertained the members of the Consumers' Council.

I appreciate the courtesy of the Director of National Kitchens all the more because, as Mr. Spencer knows, I disagree with much that he has done and entirely with the attitude he has shown towards women's work in the Kitchen movement. Advanced as he is in most of his ideas, Mr. Spencer still does not believe that women are capable of taking responsible positions. To put it bluntly, Mr. Spencer thinks (and is not alone in so thinking) that it is right and proper that women should do hard and responsible work, but when it comes to filling important positions to which adequate salaries are attached then men must be found to fill them.

Mr. Spencer had held his appointment for nearly a year, but up to September 10th, 1918, there was no woman director of National Kitchens. On that date the appointment of Mrs. Turner as an unpaid director was announced, and one cannot but smile at the early-Victorian method of its announcement, the qualification of the lady's husband being given (Mr. Turner was private secretary to Lord Rhondda and has now returned to the Local

Government Board), but no mention being made of those of the lady herself. However, the fact that there is a woman director of National Kitchens is all to the good, and women like myself, keenly interested in movements tending to ease life for other women, will wish her every success in her career.

In the days of Suffrage meetings we women were often bidden to go home and make a pudding, or to go back to the kitchen which was our proper place (It also often amused me that sternly respectable Suffrage spinsters were continually told to go home and nurse the baby, though no one would have been more scandalised had they produced a baby to nurse than the men who proffered that advice !); and in Germany, of course, Church, children, and kitchen, which in the ugly tongue spoken in that country conveniently begin with K, were always considered to be the subjects which should absorb the attention of right-thinking females. But at all events the Germans are logical, for when they organised what they termed "War Kitchens" they gave their women-kind a free hand. I only wish I could say that they had made an enormous success of these kitchens, but judging from the accounts in the German newspapers War Kitchens do not seem to have given satisfaction. That, however, is probably to be accounted for by scarcity of food,



labour, and fuel rather than by bad management. Complaints were many, but the one generally made was that the amount of food supplied did not correspond with the coupons detached from the food cards.

One woman who with her children had been a constant customer, said that potato coupons for the week were deducted for the amount of  $23\frac{1}{2}$  lb., whereas the total amount received did not come to more than half as much. Also the meat and fish additions to a dish were often so scanty that there was not enough to go round, but no repayment either in food or money was made. The Town Council concerned took the opposite opinion and said that the full amount of the food coupons taken was supplied.

From the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, in which was an article on mass feeding in Hamburg, it appeared that from May 25th to June 9th, 1917, the Kitchens had to be enlarged. Men and women from the workshops had precedence and were served at once with food to be eaten on the premises, the rest went first to the cashier's desk to buy for money or for food vouchers a stamped ticket for the next day, exchange the one bought the previous day for a number, and take their place with this number and their basin in front of the serving counter. While the number of those who ate in the Kitchen varied very little from day to day, the number of those

who fetched it to take home fluctuated greatly. Therefore, food was only sold to those who had purchased a ticket the day previously. The fluctuations depended on the position of the food supply at the time and also on the menu. Eel soup served once a week attracted crowds. It was made of fish, potatoes, vegetables, fat, barley, sago, Sauer Kraut, a little sugar, and vinegar, salt, and a few raisins. When there were not sufficient fresh vegetables, pickled or dried vegetables were used instead. Here it was stated the food was scanty, both in quality and quantity, but it was sufficient and would be so till peace came, but statements made by persons returned from Germany either to this country or to neutral countries do not coincide with this expression in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*.

The financing of German War Kitchens was regulated differently in different towns, and, apart from those established by large munition works for their own employees, the War Kitchens often received monetary assistance from the municipality or from private individuals. The latter assistance, however, fell off as time went on.

Food tickets were sold at different prices—20 Pf. for school children and needy persons, 40 Pf. for others, but a year previous to November, 1917, the cost of a meal exceeded 40 Pf. and had to be made up. Since then this sum has increased enormously

owing to the rise of prices, and the greater number of applicants.

At the head of each Kitchen was a manageress who was responsible for the whole business. Her most difficult task was to keep peace between the public and the Kitchen workers, to hear complaints, and patiently to answer questions very often repeated. Beside her stood the Trade Union representatives to assist in keeping order. The manageress had the appointing of the whole Kitchen staff and as fifteen women were reckoned to each thousand litres of food the staff numbered far over the hundred. The manageress was also responsible for the stores.

Theoretically the working of these Public Kitchens was carried on on uniform lines, but in practice there were many individual differences, the arrangements reflected the individuality of the respective superintendents.

One of the Hamburg Kitchens was formerly a municipal flower market and was capable of producing ten thousand litres of food. The quality of the food supplied in the War Kitchens depended on the conditions of supplies at the time and on the varying capabilities of the superintendents. Some of the superintendents, even after three years of War, were honorary workers, others received salaries, and in addition to the superintendent, each War Kitchen had its bookkeepers,

cashiers, ticket collectors, cooks, boiler women, stirrers, and vegetable maids.

There was a great variety in technical equipment. In some Kitchens were to be found electric stoves, electrically driven potato washers, peelers, and rinsers; in others the old-fashioned boiler with a pipe taken through a broken window into the air. In technical respects the War canteens of the private munition firms were better equipped than the War Kitchens. At Krupp's works the workers of the 9th Mechanics' Shops found their meal ready for them at twelve o'clock in the canteen, each portion in a separate warmed compartment. At the same time, heated trucks sounding bells took the cooked food to the houses of the colony.

In January, 1917, there were four working-class Kitchens and one middle-class Kitchen in a working-class suburb of Berlin. In July the total number was ten. The first central Kitchen in Berlin City was opened on the 10th July, 1917, with eight distributing centres. In August, 1917, there were eleven Kitchens and sixty-six distributing centres. On the 1st October, 1916, the municipal organisation also took over the work of feeding necessitous school children.

In the autumn of 1917 I went with Miss Kate Manly and Mr. Senn to see what was being done in Paris with regard to National Kitchen work. We visited the School Children's Canteen in the 13th



*Arrondissement*, also the *École de la rue Fogan*, the *Fourneau Économique* in the *Rue des Épinettes*, the *Repas Ordinaires* in the *Rue de Crimés*, the *Repas Professionel* in the *Avenue du Maine*, "*La Vie a son Prix*" in the 14th *Arrondissement*, and some of the canteens of munition factories and commercial houses.

The *Cantines Scolaires* are analogous to our meals for necessitous children, the *Cuisines Populaires* approximate though not very nearly to our Public Kitchens, while the *Réfectoires* are the same as our canteens in munition factories and other works.

A fourth group, the "*Foyers Cantines des Ouvrières d'Usines*," stands midway between the *Cuisines Populaires* and the *Réfectoires*. They were established for the benefit of employees in works, but were organised by outside committees and not by the employers themselves. So far as we were able to learn, the French Government had not either actively organised or assumed the control of any Public Kitchens. Such organisations as existed, and they were numerous, had been established by the municipality or by charitable or philanthropic societies, or, as in the case of canteens, by firms of employers. All were partially supported or subsidised, sometimes by the rates, sometimes by private subscriptions (largely through the *Comité de Secours National*), or they formed

part of a large business concern as in the case of a factory canteen, where they were organised as a branch of the General Welfare Work of the Factory and were not intended by the heads of the firm to be a paying department.

These latter canteens were the only Kitchens that can be said to have been established on a permanent basis. The others were more or less temporary, created by the exigencies of the times.

The Children's Canteens were organised under the direction of M. Le Fèvre, head of the Préfecture of the Seine, and under the immediate direction of an inspectress, who drew up the monthly menus for all canteens in advance. One meal a day was given, consisting either of soup, potatoes, and another vegetable; or of soup, meat, and one vegetable. We saw an example of these in the 13th *Arrondissement*, but were unable to see a meal served.

The *Repas Populaires* (Popular Meals) had numerous centres where complete meals at popular prices could be taken. They were a development of the "*Soupes Communistes*" organised before the War. In 1914 the Committee of Public Safety, when reviewing existing arrangements for feeding necessitous persons, decided that soup gave insufficient nourishment and that complete meals were necessary. Such meals were organised under *L'Union des Syndicats Ouvriers*, *Les Conférences de*

*Saint Vincent de Paul, Les Fourneaux Économiques* and various other societies.

The principle in all was the same, the price of the meal being only partly paid by the consumer.

The *Repas Professionels* were described in English newspapers, I remember, and were founded to meet the needs of professional people, artists, actors, etc. ; they were not limited to professional people but were open to the public, but only a small number patronised them. We visited one on the recommendation of M. Bled, attended by only fifty or sixty people per day. The customers paid 60 centimes for a meal consisting of soup, meat, vegetables, cheese, or dessert. 10 centimes per meal was paid by the *Comité du Secours National*.

*La Vie a son Prix* was an institution of which only one example then existed in Paris, and on the occasion of our visit it had been closed for five weeks owing to lack of custom. It was philanthropic only in the sense that no profit was realised and was the only instance of a Public Kitchen in which the meal was wholly paid for by the consumer. The price used to be 75 centimes, then 1 franc. It was illuminating to find that the only Public Kitchen in Paris in which the attempt to be self-supporting had been made should have failed. At one time about 1700 persons a day came ; the numbers sank to 500,

then 400, and finally no one came. I cannot say if it is true, but I heard it suggested that this Kitchen failed because of the lack of variety in the bills of fare, a criticism which English Public Kitchens would do well to note.

*Les Foyers Cantines des Ouvrières d'Usines* had been organised since the War under an influential committee of ladies, the object of which was to provide restaurants and rest-rooms for women, either in works or in the immediate neighbourhood of the works. These Canteens were not intended to be limited to Paris but organised throughout France.

Speaking generally Miss Manly and myself agreed that the food offered by all these institutions was, as a rule, well prepared, better prepared we were inclined to think than in corresponding places in England. The flavour and texture of the soups, for example, were better, and a greater variety of these and of vegetables was offered.

Conservative methods of cooking were little practised. For instance, potatoes were not cooked in their skins and vegetables were boiled instead of being steamed. When roast meat was served it was slightly cooked, sliced, and then placed to cook gently in a gravy or sauce. The stews were very tender and well flavoured. Puddings were never served nor was any pastry made. This of course made it possible to reduce the cooking plant



considerably. Further, it was noticeable that *chefs* at high wages were often employed and the cooking was not left to overworked women receiving anything from 15s. to £2 a week wages.

It will be seen, therefore, that in Paris up to the autumn of 1917 National Kitchens as we understand them did not exist. I believe that some French ladies have since been to this country to study the English National Kitchens, but I am not aware what has been done with regard to them in Paris.

As I write appeals are being made for women to come forward to act as cooks and supervisors in Public Kitchens. Considering that the success of these Kitchens rests chiefly upon the women who staff them and by whose hands all the hard, heavy, and disagreeable work of cleaning and cooking must be done, I repeat once more that it appears to me extraordinarily bad policy on the part of the Ministry of Food that they did not from the first pay the women of this country the well-earned compliment of putting women into the responsible and well-paid positions which were created when a National Kitchen Section of the Ministry was organised.

## CHAPTER X

### DOMESTIC WORKERS AND FOOD ECONOMY

A domestic workers' patriotic demonstration at Drury Lane—Mr. Harry Lauder—Grievances—The domestic problem—What servants dislike—The new housekeeping—Cooks' conferences—Mrs. Archibald Weigall's idea—Mr. Kriens and his demonstrations—A domestic workers' meeting at Sheffield—A Lord Mayor and his secretary.

**W**ORK which I enjoyed was that of speaking at special meetings for Domestic Workers. Miss Musgrave Watson thinks she invented that title and I think I did, but we do not either of us really mind which way it was !

The first of these was a Patriotic Demonstration of Domestic Workers, held at Drury Lane Theatre, most kindly lent by Mr. Arthur Collins and organised by the Women's Sub-Committee of the Lord Mayor's Committee. The Committee meetings took place, by permission of Mrs. Douglas Vickers, at Chapel House. Miss Musgrave Watson was the honorary secretary, and the Committee, I think, consisted of Mrs. Douglas Vickers, Mrs. Rochfort Maguire, Lady Ferrers, Mrs. Llewellyn Roberts, Miss Chamberlain, and myself, and members of the

households of Lord Lansdowne, Lord Sandhurst, Lord Rothschild, and various others composed the Committee of the Domestic Workers.

The *Daily Telegraph* gave a leader to this meeting, from which I quote :—

“Mr. J. Shepherd, of Lord Rothschild’s household, presided yesterday over one of the most remarkable gatherings ever held in Drury Lane Theatre. It consisted of a mass meeting of Domestic Workers, and the thirty-six stewards were under the direction of Mr. Bradford, butler to Adeline Duchess of Bedford. The object was to enlist the aid of the servants of all grades, of the great houses of the country, in saving money and economising food, thus assisting in the prosecution of the War. While the chairman was the steward at Tring Park, and the audience consisted, in the main, of the staffs of large private establishments in the West-end and in the country, the speakers included Lord Balfour of Burleigh, Mr. Harry Lauder, and Mrs. C. S. Peel, in association with the house stewards of the Duke of Portland and the Marquis of Lansdowne. There is something peculiarly British in such a meeting. The pen of a Dickens might in other circumstances have described it in half-humorous and half-cynical vein ; but we can imagine with what enthusiasm, in the conditions which confront us, he would have enforced the

moral, and with what sympathetic words he would have reminded the nation of the value of this fresh evidence of the unity of sentiment which binds the whole population together. . . . The assembly in Drury Lane Theatre was characteristic of the times in which we are living. It is being realised more clearly day by day that the call for patriotic sacrifice is made to all sections of the community, with the assurance that there is no man, woman, or child who cannot do something in the emergency."

All the world now knows what a wonderful speaker is Mr. Harry Lauder. Until the Drury Lane meeting I had never seen him off the stage, and found a quiet clean-shaven little man, who might have been an Elder of the Church rather than a music-hall artiste. Later that year, when I was at Harrogate, I went to the theatre there to hear Mr. Lauder. He was giving special entertainments, in order to collect a fund for British War Aims, for which cause he afterwards went to America.

The little man in his absurd dress held the house enthralled—now a snatch of song, now a brief speech, and first we laughed and then we cried. He told of that desolate battle-land out in France; the torn and tortured earth; the shred of blood-stained tartan which fluttered from the wire through which our men had forced their way. The



great audience was absolutely still, and look where you would on faces of men and women alike you saw tears drop down. Harry Lauder is one of the greatest artists I have ever known.

To return to Drury Lane : this patriotic demonstration was not altogether easy to arrange ; but I think it did a great deal of good, and thanks were due to Lady Rhondda who did so much to help the Food Economy campaign, even in its early days before Lord Rhondda became Controller, and who, if my memory serves me, paid the necessary expenses.

This meeting was followed by a great number of other meetings for domestic servants. The Lord Mayor of Liverpool called one at which he presided, there was a great gathering at Sheffield at which Lady Ellis—the Mistress Cutler—took the chair, and a large number of private meetings.

At the greater number of these gatherings no employers were present, and the servants talked very openly with me. Their chief point was that food represented to them part of their wages ; that in most cases they entered service because by so doing they could obtain better living than would otherwise be the case. They also complained that while economies were required in kitchen, servants' hall and housekeeper's room, no economies were made in the dining-room, or if less meat and bread were used, that the lack of these foods was made

up by a supply of costly extras of all kinds, whereas the servants were expected to eat less bread and meat and were not provided with substitutes.

There were of course legitimate grievances on both sides. Some employers did not play the game, and emphatically in other cases the servants did not play the game either. Often, however, they refused to alter their diet because they had no understanding of the position, and this ignorance was not confined to domestic workers or to any one class ; there were plenty of educated though quite unthinking persons who failed to see why they should not continue to live in the lavish manner to which they had been accustomed. They pooh-poohed the idea that it was necessary to economise in food, and then added : “ and if it is necessary, then it is all the fault of the Government.”

In reply to one such “ Food Hog,” as they were nicknamed, I ventured to remind her that England is an island, and that we depended to a most dangerous extent on overseas countries for our food. “ But that is nothing new,” she replied, quite failing to realise that when the world was at peace there were sufficient ships to bring the food to our shores, but when practically all the world was at war, when the shipping of Germany, one of the five great shipping countries of the world, was to some extent rendered useless, when ships were being sunk at a most serious rate by submarines,

when all the needs of the vast armies and navies of the Allies had to be provided for, the amount of shipping which could be allotted to civilian needs must of necessity be greatly reduced.

When my Domestic audiences grasped the fact that the way in which they personally dealt with the food problem was of importance to their country, I did not find them less ready to make sacrifices than persons of any other class. It was also noticeable that for the most part in houses where the employers set the right example there was little trouble with the servants.

Travelling about England as I did from March, 1917, to March, 1918, I studied the changes brought about in our domestic life by a shortage of food and labour. The simplification of life which has resulted has, I think, in most cases proved a blessing. That dreadful struggle to keep up appearances, to do as everybody else does ("everybody else" invariably appearing to be better off than oneself), has almost ceased. Women who spent time, money, energy on striving to obtain quantities of things they did not really want have something better to do. And I who say this am, or used to be, as bad as any of them, worse indeed! In my youth I always wanted palaces, powdered footmen and Paquin frocks (it was scarcely necessary to tell you in the first chapter that I am a journalist: I think in the headlines of the poster which the War

has killed), but as my eldest daughter, when very young, expressed it: "I want them, but I don't *really* want them," which makes all the difference.

It will be vastly interesting to see what changes in our domestic life will grow out of the War. This nation has been forced to realise the value of its women. Never again will it be able to spare their services, be they social, industrial, professional. And neither can the nation afford ill-kept houses, neglected children and badly cooked food. But to ensure a high standard of domesticity need not usurp the energies of the greater part of our women. We could, with proper organisation, free thousands of women from work which they do badly for work which they would do well.

To put the matter briefly, housekeeping must become a modern industry.

Circumstances have enabled me to obtain special knowledge of the unrest and dissatisfaction which exists amongst servants. These domestic meetings made it even more evident that there must be a reconstruction of idea as well as of practice, both on the part of the employer and employed, if what should be a skilled and honourable profession is not to become more disorganised and unsatisfactory than it is even at the present time. The last two or three generations of employers to a great extent, and unconsciously so, have been to blame for the trouble which now



exists. Still, it is not a credit to women that an industry, for the conduct of which they are mainly responsible, is in such an unsatisfactory condition. The average employer of servants refuses to move with the times ; she will not look at the position from any but her own point of view. In the days when domestic work was almost the only profession open to women there was an adequate supply of cheap labour. After it became possible for large numbers of women to earn a living in other capacities, the supply of labour available for domestic uses steadily decreased. It became the fashion to despise domestic work. Now the educated woman should have realised how mischievous such a mental attitude towards domesticity must become, but what happened ? Highly educated young women were encouraged to consider that almost any kind of work was of more importance than that of keeping homes, of feeding people and of tending children. Women who were too stupid to become post office clerks, shop assistants, etc., were thought quite clever enough to cook, to clean houses, and to bring up young children. We became "terribly genteel" and talked about "menial duties" and "mere servants."

Many women, if obliged through stress of circumstances to do some of the domestic work of their homes, performed it in a shamefaced manner. They did not trouble to think, and therefore failed

to realise that the foundation of all national health and happiness is the home. This extraordinary contempt of domesticity was also, though they would be the last to admit it, encouraged by men who thought it the proper thing that their wives should be unpaid domestic drudges, and by the habit of terming women who had to bring up families and do some, if not all, of their household work "idle women." "The hardworking man who earned the money and the idle woman who stayed at home and spent it" was the mental picture of his household cherished by many a man. The result of this attitude towards "service," the refusal to give to domestic work its due importance as a profession needing trained, intelligent, well-paid workers, has had dire results. It has resulted, for instance, in houses which are built and fitted apparently with the express purpose of making them as difficult and as expensive to keep clean as possible. There is so much dirty, disagreeable work to be done in the ordinary house that it is no wonder many women wish to escape it.

The fact that educated women despised domestic work has naturally caused less well-educated women to despise it, and so it happens that to-day servants are a class apart.

Young men who will walk out and take off their hats to "young ladies" in shops and in offices will

not consort with domestic servants. Well-to-do servants desirous of taking a holiday in a boarding-house must conceal the fact that they are in service. The same attitude is found amongst the lower middle-class employer. The names "slavey," "skivvie," and "Mary Jane" are employed, and in music-halls and in comic papers servants only too often are depicted as ugly, ungainly persons with caps on one side and smuts on their noses. The consequence is, that in spite of the fact that domestic service is at the present moment a well-paid profession, it is so unpopular that enquiry made of persons who have a large experience of the working-class girl, of the girl herself, and of those women who have left service to take up war work, elicits the fact that they will never go into service or go back to service if they can earn their living in any other way. The two reasons given are "because in service your work is never done," and "because no one thinks anything of you if you are in service."

To those who have vision it is evident that the housekeeping of to-morrow will be a different housekeeping from that of yesterday and to-day—a prospect for which I for one am thankful. For many years past keeping house has proved an occupation which has cost an amount of money and energy out of all proportion to the results obtained.

To-day, when domestic labour is at a premium, we regret all the labour-saving appliances which might have been ours had we made the demand which creates the supply. Women who for the first time in their lives have had to clean the kitchen grate and sweep out flues, who have had to wash dishes, to grovel in coal cellars and carry heavy coal scuttles and trays up and down their own stairs, and the stairs of hospitals, begin to wonder why houses are built as they are, furnished as they are—why, when water, gas and electricity are at our command, we have not made fuller use of them. Why indeed it is that our houses, our methods of life, are labour-making rather than labour-saving.

Unfortunately, it is too late to remedy our immediate difficulties ; we cannot now build or rebuild, we cannot install gas or electricity and replace that ogre the coal range by a more intelligent appliance, for neither skilled male labour nor material is at our disposal. To add to our difficulties there is an acute shortage of female domestic labour, and not only is the shortage acute at the moment but likely to become more so, and further it is by no means certain that the end of the War will see a return of great numbers of women to domestic service unless its conditions are considerably changed. Now, therefore, is the time for us to give our close attention to the great question of



housekeeping, so that we may be ready, directly circumstances permit, to make those changes which must be made if we desire to live in a cleanly, wholesome fashion at a proportionate cost of money and mental and physical energy.

There are many ways by which the toil of housekeeping may be lightened. A more general use of national kitchens; the institution of centres from which trustworthy, competent, cleanly uniformed domestic workers may be obtained by the hour; the remodelling of homes in such a way that one-third to one-half of all the hard and dirty work now performed will become unnecessary; the re-organisation of domestic service so that it shall take its place as a modern industry, the conditions of which are pleasing to the worker—all should play an important part in the reconstruction of our social life.

One can but hope that from mental rigidity, from dislike of what is new, changes which will be for the good of humanity will not be delayed. I quote Miss Clementina Black (*A New Way of Housekeeping*): "Waste is always a public sin, and the particular sort of waste created by our lack of domestic organisation is probably the most widely spread and the least gratifying even of any that exists. It wastes time, money, energy, health, food, fuel and house-room, and above all it wastes and breaks up the labour power of literally millions

of women whose unhampered service is needed by the country, and was needed by the country long before it recognised the need."

In the autumn of 1917 and spring of 1918 some interesting Cooks' Conferences took place at Grosvenor House. Mrs. Archibald Weigall suggested that ladies who had clever cooks should allow them to ask other cooks to come and learn to prepare special war dishes, and from this idea grew a course of practical demonstrations, which were given by Mr. Kriens at the London County Council Technical Institute in Vincent Square, Westminster, by the kind permission of Sir Robert Blair.

Mr. Kriens has a genuine love of his art, and is an extraordinarily clever demonstrator. His methods of making a delicious clear soup from vegetables alone; the delicious dishes he obtains from that formerly despised article, the cod's head; his talent for using every atom of food to good advantage; his methods of cooking vegetables and cereals, differing considerably from those practised by most cooks, must have caused astonishment to that extraordinarily wasteful person the British cook.

I remember that we took an enormous amount of trouble in organising these demonstrations, only asking that those who attended them should do their best to pass on to others the information they received. Mr. Kriens, of course, had to fit in the

times of his lectures to suit his other work, and in order to take all the cooks who applied for tickets some of the lectures had to be given in the evening. When this was the case, letters were written to the employers explaining the circumstances and asking if they would spare their cooks. Only one lady made any objection to this arrangement, and considering that the lectures were given free of charge, and benefited the employer as well as the cook, I think that her letter is worthy of publication. "Madam," she wrote, "I would beg to remind you that I keep a cook in order to cook my dinner, and therefore I should not dream of allowing her to attend your lecture at such an unreasonable hour. Yours faithfully——!!"

The meeting for domestic servants which took place at the Cutlers' Hall, Sheffield, was one of the most delightful I have ever addressed. Lady Ellis, the Mistress Cutler, had asked that the maids who intended to be present should answer her invitation, a request which they ignored. But nevertheless they came; they filled the hall; they filled the balcony; the great double doors at the end of the room were opened and chairs placed in the corridor. When there were no more chairs they stood. They were even brought in and given seats on the platform, and when no more seats were available they sat tailor-fashion on and round the platform. Never do I wish to talk to a more intel-

ligent, quick-witted and nicer-looking collection of girls.

Soon after this I wanted a copy of the Report of this meeting. It tarried. At last the following extract from the Ministerial Alphabet was sent to the Establishment Section by one of our secretaries :—

R's the reporter, described as official,  
Bartle's his name (we don't know his initial),  
The mystical tale of his copies is seven,  
They're as hard to secure as a front seat in Heaven.  
You're allowed to *see* one after weeks of entreating,  
Provided you'd nothing to do with the meeting.

The report followed by an express pinafores, pig-tailed messenger.

It was after that meeting that I received a letter, and have since been the recipient of several others, the writers of which suggested that there should be social clubs for domestic workers, where they could have lectures on the questions of the day, classes, concerts, and other entertainments organised by themselves, and to which they could invite their young men friends.

It certainly appears that some such organisation in addition to the Y.W.C.A. and the Girls' Friendly Society is needed.

It was on my way back from Sheffield that I took a meeting at Chesterfield, and stayed a night with Miss Violet Markham, who has a house in that



part of the world, and a very charming house. You enter the drawing-room and at once feel that here you will never be bored. This atmosphere, unfortunately, cannot be purchased with the decorations, the chairs and tables. It has to be developed by the persons who inhabit the room.

Miss Markham wore that night a black velvet gown and a shawl—yes, a real shawl, and I should like a picture of her in it painted by Lavery.

Mrs. Tennant and Miss Markham were for some time directors in the Ministry of National Service, and naturally we discussed our experiences. Over many of them we smiled, but also we sympathised alike with two great griefs, for both Mrs. Tennant and Mrs. Reeves lost their sons during that summer. Mrs. Reeves' boy was flying near Cambrai when he was seen to fall on June 6th, and it was not until August that definite news of his death was received. Yet in spite of the heart-breaking anxiety and sorrow which she suffered she worked steadily on.

It was proposed that another large meeting for Domestic Workers should be held, "in another place," as they say in the House of Lords, and I journeyed off to interview a certain Lord Mayor on the subject. This dignified, elderly gentleman, wearing a wide ribbon from which hung a beautiful star, was seated in his parlour, and received me very kindly. The poor dear was dreadfully distressed about his own servants.

"What am I to do?" he asked. "In my position it is necessary that a certain amount of entertaining shall take place. I don't see how I can have guests and not feed them properly—though, of course, reasonably," he hastily added. (I don't feel quite certain that his idea of reasonable feeding coincided with that of the Food Controller.) "But the servants say if all this entertaining goes on they don't see why they should be cut down in their food. Just imagine how it would be if they all gave notice and left me in this great, huge house with no one to do anything!"

The mere idea made him quite pale.

"What am I to do?" he asked again. "I should be only too glad to have a meeting and to take the chair, but it wouldn't be agreeable if some of the servants got up and heckled, would it? At some meetings people *do* heckle dreadfully," he added sadly.

But the Mayor's secretary, another elderly gentleman, took a much more cheerful view of the position.

"Dear me, dear me, why they'd never *think* of doing that. You needn't be frightened about *that*," he said to the Mayor, like a kind mamma reassuring a nervous child.

"Well, if you feel sure about it I suppose we had better arrange it," agreed his lordship, still not

very happy in his mind. "Fetch the diary, will you?"

So the diary was fetched—a large and important volume bound in purple and gold.

"How about the 25th—a Wednesday? And do be sure it *is* a Wednesday," suggested the Lord Mayor rather sharply, "and don't go looking it up in the wrong month."

This amused the secretary vastly.

"Ha! ha! Oh! no, I won't look it up in the wrong month. No, I'm not likely to do *that*!"

I studied my engagement book.

"But," I ventured, "*is* the 25th a Wednesday?"

The secretary turned over the pages of the purple diary industriously.

"Well, there!" he said, "and I looked it up in the wrong month after all!"

The Lord Mayor gazed at me over his spectacles and then he winked. (Think of it—to be winked at by a Lord Mayor! Has that ever happened to you?)

"Well, you know," he said quite tolerantly to his secretary, "you *did* do the same thing last week."

By this time I was suffering acutely from restrained laughter, and having finally fixed Thursday, the 25th, at three o'clock, the two old gentlemen both shook me warmly by the hand, and I took my departure. But sad to say for various reasons that meeting was abandoned.

The fact, that for almost, if not the first time, servants have been called upon to come forward as members of a great industry to show their temper as citizens must have had its effect. As a class they take too little interest in national questions, and naturally so, for their lives are narrow, their interests restricted, and the result is bad from every point of view.

Our ideas change (thank Heaven that they do), and a few years ago meetings presided over by Lord Mayors in all the dignity of their robes of office, the speakers at which were peers, famous actors, domestic workers and a Government official, such as I then was, would have caused even more of a newspaper flutter than they did cause.



## CHAPTER XI

### “ OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF BABES ”

Mrs. Reeves arranges an Economy campaign in schools—A foolish letter—What the children said—The nation's house-keeper—Lord Rhondda as a profiteer—“ Yer poor feet”—Where and how some children live—The Mayor's hat—Fame.

IT was during the autumn of 1917 that Mrs. Pember Reeves arranged with the London County Council Education Officer, Sir Robert Blair, that certain ladies approved by him should address the Elementary School children on the necessity of economy in food. The children between nine and fourteen years of age were to reproduce their impressions of the lectures in essays, and the two best essays written by children of each age in each school, one a boy and one a girl, were to be selected by the head teacher and forwarded to the Ministry of Food. These essays we read and wrote a few words of appreciation on each. They were then stamped with the Ministry of Food stamp and returned to the writers. The essays, of course, were perused by admiring friends and relatives, and in many cases

after the school meetings it was found possible to arrange meetings of mothers, followed by practical cookery demonstrations.

After this scheme had been made public we received an indignant letter from a gentleman who suggested that it was disgraceful of us to try and persuade children who already were probably underfed to eat less. This is a specimen of the foolish letters which some people write. The writer had no justification for the suggestion that we did for one minute propose to ask children to eat less than it was right that they should eat. In such work as this we were always at pains to impress upon the audience that it was not the duty of anyone, least of all the child, to eat less than will keep him in health, and that all that was asked of him in his capacity as a citizen was that he should do his best to help his country by eating carefully and by avoiding waste, realising that food is a sacred thing, in the bringing of which to this country the lives of many brave men are sacrificed.

The task of interesting the children was not difficult. They were full of intelligence, full of desire to hear and understand, and everywhere they had already received sound and patriotic instructions which enabled many of them to answer questions regarding the food problem in a fashion which would have done credit to persons of far more

advanced years. Some of the youthful essayists expressed themselves in a most amusing manner.

One little boy of nine was quite clear as to what part he should play. "If," he wrote, "I *here* of any people grumbling about not enough food I shall tell them not to be always grumbling. Many people have to eat less than you." Another boy had evidently considered the difficulties of the situation and was full of sympathy for Lord Rhondda: "Lord Rhondda's position is no enviable one; his work is most difficult, for he has to provide for rich as well as poor, and some peace fads poison his ideas and tasks in abundance."

Another youth preferred to consider the faults of others rather than to dwell upon what he himself must do, and remarked: "In many rich households waste of a most disgusting kind is carried on"—a fact only too true, though in fairness to the upper classes it must be said that well-to-do people effected a great reduction in their food consumption long before rationing became compulsory.

A little girl in explaining some of the reasons for the world shortage of food remarked: "We had a very bad harvest, not at all a nice summer, as England is not near the Equator and the things will not cultivate." Another small girl wrote: "The besieging of Paris was far worse than we are now. Why! they would think it a treat to

get a mouse, and that cost 1s. 9½d." Her statement was not quite correct, for rats, not mice, were sold during the siege of Paris for 1s. 9d.

The story of a certain General who, during the siege of Paris, sent a birthday present of cheese on a gun-carriage surrounded by soldiers, to a lady, became in one essay a dramatic tale of a lady *fiend* of a *celebrate* General.

The fact that 15s. was paid for a pound of elephant flesh during that siege impressed the children deeply, and almost always led to the conclusion that after all so far we had not had much to grumble about in England.

The submarine menace was a point which interested all the boys, and one writing of a sailor who had been torpedoed no less than three times, and had yet signed on for a fourth voyage, remarked with brevity and truth: "And I call that plucky."

In many cases the children wrote in dramatic if obscure fashion. According to one boy: "In the recent shortage of bread, tea, and sugar, the poor people *had* to economise or take the results, which boded ill for those who discarded the Food Minister's warning"—a sentence the meaning of which it was somewhat difficult to disentangle.

The girls showed a practical spirit, one remarking: "And after all, why waste a crust when you can make a bread pudding of it?" A little girl of



eleven highly approved of Lord Rhondda. "Lord Rhondda is now our Food Controller, and a very good Food Controller too. We call him England's housekeeper"; while another showed a sympathetic mind as she remarked: "Lord Rhondda, our present Food Controller, has got a bit of work to fix a sugar scheme, but one now is fixed and the papers came round yesterday." Another critic remarked: "Lord Rhondda says he will make meat cheaper, but he'll have a job to do it"; and another, possessed of a tender heart, grieved because she imagined that he had to sit up all night writing the sugar cards single-handed.

A girl of eleven wrote a delightful essay. "We must be thankful," said she, "that God has given us such a sensible man for a housekeeper as Lord Rhondda. Therefore, bravo for Lord Rhondda's care of the nation's food. I am one who will volunteer to win the war by saving food."

Another small person opined: "Food is so scarce because the *submermerines* sink our food vessels and because all ships are scarce, so if you give your baby in the pram a piece of bread see that it do not throw it in the gutter to *wast*."

The boys showed a truculent spirit. According to J. R.: "Germany meant to be head country of the world, but thank goodness was *stopt*"; while according to J. N.: "The Kaiser meant to capture France, then start on England and America, and

get the whole world, but to his surprise we came in and so he didn't."

The grammar and spelling of a small lady of nine was a little strange though her meaning was quite clear. "Yesterday a lady come and tell us not to *waiste* food and to go very economising," and another who I think must have been Irish and acquainted with the Blarney stone, wrote: "A young lady about forty came yesterday and talked most interesting!"

A little girl of ten wrote a wonderful paper. "We are not asked to eat less food, but to eat slowly, thoughtfully, and respectfully"; while in another essay an important point was made in a few words. "Think," said the writer, "why! it takes four months to build a ship and only about four minutes to sink it!"

On one occasion when trying to ascertain if the children had any clear idea of what the words "Food Controller" might mean, and leading up to the explanation that he was the nation's house-keeper, I began: "And so Lord Rhondda is the nation's——" "Profiteer," suddenly shrilled a little girl in the front row, beaming with delight at having at last found a question which she could answer to her complete satisfaction.

Elsewhere when explaining that in some circumstances food was more valuable than money, I wanted to elicit in reply to the query, "Then what

is now the greatest treasure of the nation ? ” the answer—Food. A minute boy with spectacles and no front teeth, in a surprisingly loud and deep lisp announced : “ Lord Wondda ! ”

The common sense of the girls came out in the paper of E. F., aged thirteen, who remarked : “ Some people have not got good teeth and cannot eat crusts. Well then, they can make sop ” ; and the spirit of the nation at large was breathed in the words of the boy aged ten, who ended his essay : “ Anyway I will do my bit. God save the King,” and as a tailpiece to his composition had painted with great care and correctness the flags of America, France, and England.

Clever Miss Elizabeth Robins, actress, speaker, writer, and suffragist, was one of our panel of school lecturers, and Mrs. York Fawcett, so well known as a speaker for the National War Savings Committee, was to have helped us, but for some reason was prevented. Mrs. Pelly, mother of Mrs. Christopher Lowther, did a great deal of work in this campaign.

At first it always seemed to be taken for granted that it was only the girls to whom we should talk about food, but later the boys also attended our lectures. I always made a point of letting the children do a great deal of talking, continually asking them questions and giving them an opportunity of expressing their opinions and thus

realised the truth of the words: "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings cometh wisdom." I have often thought that it is a great pity that the work done by our Elementary teachers is not granted more publicity. It is splendid work, work which cannot be repaid in money. The discipline which seems to be combined with a friendly spirit between teacher and scholar struck me greatly.

I remember I spoke in a very large school in Hammersmith; at a delighted little Catholic school in Earl's Court, at another Catholic school near Drury Lane Theatre, and at one or two Jewish schools. I particularly enjoyed my visit to a large Jewish school quite close to Petticoat Lane.

The Jewish children are for the most part very precocious, and extremely intelligent, also they give the impression of being better fed than Gentile children of the same class. I had some talk with the headmaster of one of these schools later, and he told me that he considered the Jewish women were better housekeepers than the Gentile women, that they gave more time to cooking and paid more attention to diet.

The Catholic children are specially remarkable for their charming manners.

I visited a great many schools in the East End and some in the West End of London, generally doing a hard morning's work at the Ministry first,



then taking two school lectures during the afternoon, and returning to the Ministry for another two hours' work before dinner.

At first we were allowed the use of a Government car, but the ladies who drove them disliked these expeditions. They reported, I believe, that the people who lived in the poor neighbourhood round about the schools we visited considered our use of cars ostentatious and extravagant. Be that as it may, the verdict went forth that we must travel to our meetings and lectures as best we could in trains and omnibuses—a most exhausting process, though in some ways enjoyable. Many a time asking the way of some woman in a shawl, curling pins and a cloth cap, a dock worker, a policeman, or magnificently arrayed Jewish lady with a feathered hat and many rings, and so entering into conversation, points of view were suggested which might otherwise never have been brought to my notice.

Previous to this I had journeyed about in the poor working-class districts of London many a time, chiefly in South London, but wherever I went—North, South, East, or West—I brought away with me an impression of extraordinary kindness. “Why, dearie,” said a large and rather dirty woman of whom I asked the way one very hot day, “you’ll have to walk a long way to get there. ’Ow yer poor feet will ache.” And she was

right—they did. Imagine any smart lady of whom one asked one's way in Sloane Street expressing such concern for a stranger's physical comfort !

On another occasion a munition worker off duty descended from the tram and walked a good half-mile with me because he said he was sure I'd get lost wandering about in all those streets. The poor are not all angels, neither are the rich all devils, but a lack of money and a scarcity of worldly possessions certainly seem to result in a great friendliness of manner to the stranger whether within or without your gates.

In wandering about the poorer parts of Woolwich, Poplar, Greenwich, Greenhithe, Hackney Wick, Hornsey, Notting Hill, Kensington, Ilford, Camberwell I often wondered how the power responsible for the building of our great cities could ever have thought it right that human beings should live in such surroundings. The long monotonous rows of little houses, with never a tree or a garden ; the stuffy little courts and yards ; the large substantially built houses, once occupied by middle-class people, now crowded with the families of what before the War was the casual worker, and in these houses one sink, one water-tap, and that in the basement ; one sanitary convenience, perhaps for four or five families. As I went about in these mean streets I used to think of all the women, some of them

expectant mothers, dragging up and down all those stairs to fetch a pail of water. To be born, to live, to give birth to others, and in the end to die in one or two miserable rooms in a great grey town.

In such conditions life is hard enough for men, God knows, but it is harder still for women.

I have been accused of sentimentality about the poor, but I do not think that I am either sentimental or hysterical. There is much that is good in life even in the slums, but that good exists in spite and not because of evil conditions.

For those, and there are many, who tell me that I am “sentimental about the poor,” here are some extracts from a report on the housing conditions in a certain part of London :—

“Floor of front room below street level. On wet days water streams in. Roof defective. Ceilings all stained with damp. Mrs. Dash says water pours in on bed on wet nights. Yard with pools of water. Wall-papers peeling off. Dark, airless, damp. Lavatory under stairs ; no outside ventilation—used by three families. Lavatory in scullery—partitioned but not to ceiling. Small dark scullery containing sink, copper, and lavatory. Privacy impossible. In two rooms four adults, three children, and at times two grown-up sons sleep. In seven dwellings of two rooms eight to ten persons live and sleep.”

It was to children from such homes as this that we spoke. Do you think that we asked them to eat less ?

. . . . .

I spoke to other children too. Boys in great public schools, girls in "select educational establishments," and one day I had to do a dreadful deed. I went to spend an afternoon with my youngest child at Harpenden Hall where she was then being educated. Miss English asked me if I would say a few words to the girls. I assented, and at that moment received an agonising pinch. Miss English going out of the room to call the audience together, my daughter, scarlet in the face with shame and nearly in tears, remarked piteously : "Oh, mum ! I *do* think you might consider me—it will be perfectly awful to have you talking to the girls like that." I humbly pointed out that it was not I who had proposed to do so, but that I could scarcely refuse. While I was delivering my little speech I watched Denise anxiously regarding the faces of her schoolfellows. A look of relief spread over her countenance when they appeared interested, and eventually laughed and finally clapped loudly.

A couple of days later I took a meeting at the theatre at Luton, and Miss English was kind enough to bring Denise to it. The Mayor put a box at their disposal and presided in robes and chain, and



then most kindly entertained us at a war tea-party in his parlour. Afterwards he took us over his hat manufactory and presented Denise with an extremely pretty hat, which she cherishes to this day and which is always known as the Mayor's hat. After this event she began to approve my entry into public life. “I suppose there must be something in it,” she admitted, “if Mayors ask you to tea.”

On the following Monday I received her weekly letter. “You will be glad to hear,” it ran, “that it was not so bad after all, and this morning Boodle had a letter from her mother, who said she had seen you on the cinema. So I expect you must be rather important. The others weren't half bad about it afterwards. I thought you would like to know.”

Such is Fame!

## CHAPTER XII

### A FEW DAYS IN FRANCE

French cookery—An air raid—On the way to Paris—Another air raid—French Government Offices—M. Clementel—M. Le Capitaine Gallard and M. Faidides—The Paris Leave Club—A corner of Blighty—Sainte Chapelle—The canteen at the Gare du Nord—Chez Andre et Hugh Citroën—2700 to Déjeuner—French babies—Housekeeping in the Renault Works—A French co-operative shop—The réfectoire of the Crédit Lyonnais—To La Guerre in a car—Through Meaux, Compiègne, Senlis, Noyon, Ham, Chauny, Blérancourt and Jussy—Comedy and tragedy—The shrine.

WHAT, I wonder, has been the cause of the popular delusion regarding the economical housekeeping of French women and of women of other nations vaguely termed "foreigners"? I have some knowledge of the cookery of France, Belgium, Germany, and Switzerland (both French and German), but I have never found that the Continental housekeeper complains less of the extravagance of her cook, or of her "general" than does the Englishwoman. The truth is that to be extravagant with goods for which you do not pay is one of the failings of human nature. The French and Flemish cooks (I have no first-hand

experience of Italian cookery) are lavish in their use of material, and they demand the best material, but they are economical inasmuch as they achieve a better result with the food they use than does the average Englishwoman. There is certainly less waste from badly, carelessly cooked food in France than in England.

However, the powers that then were in the Food Ministry were inclined to think that French cooking was economically vastly in advance of our own. Hence Mr. Ulick Wintour suggested that I should go to France, accompanied by Miss Manly, then in charge of the Cookery Section, and Mr. Herman Senn, our reference being to enquire into French methods of mass feeding.

As I am an extremely bad sailor I asked that we might be granted a special permit to travel via Folkestone and Boulogne, and this was granted.

In order that other important engagements should not be interfered with it was necessary that we should start almost at once, and we spent quite a hectic time in obtaining passports, special permits, and introductions. Judging from the passport photographs which I have seen, including my own, I can imagine no better assistance to the person who is endeavouring to conceal his identity than one of these gruesome portraits.

Sir Edmund Wyldbore Smith was most kind in giving me a special letter of introduction to

M. Clementel, Minister of Commerce; Lady Askwith and Lady Norman gave me useful and interesting introductions and the Ministry provided us with others.

I arranged to go down to India House, Kingsway, to see Sir Edmund Wyldbore Smith about our Paris visit, my appointment being, I think, at 6.30 or 7 o'clock. Miss Bellis came down with me, and very thankful I was that she did, for as we arrived at the door the commissionaire informed us that a raid warning was out. We thought there would probably be time to get home, but our taxi-man said he didn't like raids; he complained that he "couldn't drive straight in 'em and 'e'd go right 'ome," so we made for the Holborn Tube Station, imagining that as it was only the first warning that had been given, the general public would not have realised that a raid was impending.

I shall never forget the sight at Holborn Station, densely thronged chiefly with women and children. The girl who was working the lift was quite powerless to control the mob, and Miss Bellis and myself stood by her and helped as much as we were able. One woman was screaming loudly, having already frightened her three children into hysterics. This made me angry and I spoke to her sharply and annoyed her so thoroughly that in order to abuse me she stopped screaming, which was something for which to be thankful.



All the platforms, stairs, and passages were packed with people, and already family parties with pillows and wraps and food were arranging themselves for a lengthy picnic.

Miss Bellis said that she would come home with me, and by the time we arrived at Brompton Road the raid had begun. We both felt, however, that the dangers of the raid plus fresh air would be preferable to the Tube Station and made a run for it, my house being only a few seconds' walk from the station.

It was a fine autumn day on which we started from Charing Cross. The Colonel of the Scots Guards was going out that morning, and some half a dozen pipers had assembled to play him farewell.

To the War in a Pullman—but comfortable seats and an excellent lunch do but little to lighten the depression of those whose leave is ended and who are returning to take their part in the horrors of battle. In spite of the fact that the greater number of our fellow-travellers were mere boys, it was a quiet and rather depressing journey.

The weather was kind to us, and we had a smooth crossing, but, nevertheless, every one of us was ordered to wear a life-belt. Arriving at Boulogne we found that we had missed the train for Paris, and rather than wait several hours and then travel by night, we arranged to stay that evening in

Boulogne, going on to Paris by the Sunday midday train. The Base Commandant most kindly lent us his car, which enabled us to visit the hospital camp at Wimereux, where row after row of neat little huts surrounded by neat little gardens please the eye. Blue sea and sky—green grass and flowers—the sun shining, and inside the rows of huts the suffering bodies of men.

Boulogne has become a khaki town of soldiers, with here and there the distinctive grey-blue uniform of the French, and amongst the buff and blue the red fez of the Algerian soldier and the greyer blue of the Portuguese uniform.

The hotels in Boulogne were crowded, but, nevertheless, fortune, aided by the blandishments of the Base Commandant's chauffeur, favoured us, and that night we ate our dinner in the dining-room of the Hôtel Meurice—two women in a room full of men, a mass of khaki broken here and there by blue naval uniforms. We were eating our soup when suddenly the lights went out—an air-raid warning, but no one appeared to be in the least alarmed, and in spite of the fact that we had but a glass roof between us and possible bombs, the waiters produced candles and dinner went on just as before.

After a good night's rest in excellent French beds and a breakfast of coffee and rolls we went out. It was Sunday and the shops were shut,

but from a business-like small girl in a black alpaca pinafore we were able to buy two large baskets of small sweet white grapes, and thus burdened made our way to the great building, once the Casino, now a British hospital. Out on the verandah in the warm sun were rows of beds, their occupants shaded by brightly coloured Japanese umbrellas. In the beautiful airy wards looking out over the sea were men who had fought and suffered, who still suffered, and some who will suffer always. A beautiful fair Australian boy had his left arm fractured, his right arm amputated, a wound in his thigh, and his reply to our words of sympathy was: "Well, it's a man's life and I am glad to have lived it."

In this great hospital there were many empty beds and one was thankful to see them, and seeing them to pray that the scenes of 1914 may never be repeated. Then stretchers lay close upon the floors, upon the verandah, upon the steps, upon the garden paths, and the moans of men to whom no attention could be given were heard throughout the night.

Our days in France were to be so few that we had to hurry away to lunch and to catch the train to Paris, but sitting in the restaurant on the quay how could one have appetite to eat? There had been a great battle, trains full of wounded were coming in, the ambulance waggons began

to crawl past bearing their loads of mangled humanity. As silently we made our way back to the hotel to collect our luggage suddenly everyone stared skywards. The guns began—a raiding plane was on its homeward way, but it dropped no bombs and we were in no danger except from the falling shrapnel. While the noise was at its worse we took what shelter we could and then, fearful of missing the Paris train, emerged to make a dash for the hotel, pausing to pick up two pieces of shrapnel by the way.

Again, a train full of men, and with many stops, we travelled past the great hospital encampment at Étaples and on through the peaceful country, and always there were soldiers. Out there, silhouetted against the sunset sky, fishing industriously with a piece of stick and a string, was the familiar figure of Tommy, his tunic unbuttoned, his cap on the back of his head. At almost every station there was the jingling of money-boxes, and you were invited to subscribe in aid of the wounded.

At Amiens men from the front joined the train on their way for a few days' leave in Paris, and at last we arrived at the *Gare du Nord*, to wait three-quarters of an hour while our porter hunted diligently for a taxi. In Paris we missed the familiar khaki. Here there was a mass of blue-



grey, and only occasionally did we see dearly loved Tommy, though the little less loved figures of our Australian, South African, New Zealand, and American soldiers were not missing.

The morning after our arrival we presented our letters of introduction at the Embassy and at the Ministry of Commerce, a dignified building in the official quarter on the south side of the river, shut off from the street by high gates and a courtyard. In Paris Government messengers are clothed in full evening dress and we were ushered by an old man so attired into a brocade-hung waiting-room, the windows of which opened into a nicely kept garden. The curtains in this room were of a lovely faded rose-coloured brocade, the chandeliers of cut-glass, and one or two pieces of Empire furniture were placed against the walls, a beautiful old Empire table taking up the centre of the floor.

A young lady wearing a sailor jumper, short sleeves, a bangle, and her hair cut across her forehead in a straight fringe, presently came to us to assure us that M. Clementel would not keep us waiting long, and shortly after we were ushered into the room of Captain Gallard, his secretary, and there for a few moments had the pleasure of an interview with the Minister himself—a handsome grey-haired man with charming manners. Finally it was arranged that a certain M. Fauides

would most kindly escort us on some of our expeditions.

Through the kindness of M. Clementel we received an invitation from M. Andre Citroën of the Quai de Javal to lunch with him at the munition works which bear his name. Messieurs Henri and Hugh Citroën employ something like nine thousand hands, their works are modern, they make vast profits, and it is possible, therefore, to do everything to increase the health, comfort, and happiness of their employees.

The works themselves front on to the south side of the Seine, and our passes were required before we could enter a large and dignified reception-hall, where we were met by one of the Works managers who, having studied for some years the industrial methods of America, spoke English fluently. We were then taken to the restaurant itself, where we made the acquaintance of Messieurs Hugh and Henri Citroën.

The restaurant is run for the convenience of the work-people, and the firm of Citroën is not concerned as to whether it pays or not, for it is only part of a great scheme of social welfare work which comprises restaurant, dental and medical clinics, a baby crèche, and recreation-rooms for the salaried staff. At that time babies only were catered for, but we were told that it was intended to open a nursery for children up to three years

of age and recreation-rooms for the work-people as well as for the salaried staff.

At the time we visited it the restaurant was under the control of a manager and *maître d'hôtel*, and M. Hugh Citroën especially interested himself in its arrangement. It had then been open some three or four months and was only, so to speak, in its trial stage. It was proposed later on, I understood, to hand it over to a committee of the employees to manage as they thought fit.

The restaurant, kitchen, and store-rooms were all housed in one enormous glass-roofed shed. At one end were the entrance-doors and turnstiles; at the other end the kitchen and store-rooms. Over part of the kitchens was built a platform served by lifts from the kitchen, and on this platform dined the executive, the salaried staff, and the clerks. Precisely the same meal at the same price as that provided for the work-people was served, and there was only one service at twelve o'clock, when some 2700 diners sat down together.

In France it is most unusual for men and women to dine together in canteens, and when the Citroën Restaurant was first opened and it was proposed to make this arrangement it met with adverse criticism. It was prophesied that it would be impossible to keep order, but the prophets who so prophesied have proved false and it was

pleasant to see parties often consisting of father, mother, with their grown-up boys and girls, fiancés, relatives, and friends enjoying each other's society in the 1½-hour interval which was granted for the chief meal of the day.

At first it was thought necessary that police should be present, but rightly and naturally the people rebelled and demanded to be given the opportunity of arranging their affairs in their own fashion.

The price charged to the diners for the meal was 1.50 fr., and the menu consisted that day of *hors d'œuvre*, meat, a vegetable dish, cheese or dessert. Supplementary portions could be bought if desired, also some little biscuits to eat with the dessert, on that occasion a pear. Wine was an extra, and most of the workers drank coffee, which was also an extra in addition to wine.

At the time that we were guests of the Messieurs Citroën the menu consisted of *hors d'œuvre* (potato salad with an excellent sauce), roast veal with a few slices of carrot, dried haricot beans very well cooked, bread, and dessert. Owing to the extraordinary good organisation the 2700 diners were served in one hour, efficiently and in a clean and refined fashion.

The restaurant itself is divided into ten sections, each of which is complete in itself and is marked by a distinctive colour. The tables are placed in



the centre of the great hall, and up and down either side the entire length of the restaurant are serving counters fitted with electric-hot plates. Electric trolleys, worked by a girl in a neat uniform and running at a great pace, carried all the food, cutlery, etc., from the service rooms. The hot food is kept hot on electric-hot plates fitted into the counters, and the cold food, pastry, plates, etc., are set out ready on the counters.

Each table was set for twenty persons and each dish contained portions for five, ample portions being served. Extremely nice-looking tables with chairs to match of a very highly polished wood were set with neatness and precision, each worker having his table napkin, which was rolled and replaced in its numbered ring in a numbered receptacle put ready for the purpose. The cutlery and glass was of good appearance, and it was interesting to see in what a refined fashion the workers consumed their meal.

The waitresses and all the serving staff were becomingly dressed in a uniform which was daintily clean. The counters were attractively set out with little carafes of wine, dessert, and bread. There was nothing messy or squalid looking about this great canteen.

The waitresses were on duty from 8 to 5.30 and received 150.00 fr. a month and their food. In all 120 servants were employed and there

was a male *chef* and one or two male helpers, but for the most part the staff consisted of women. The kitchen equipment was extraordinarily simple, and yet with that equipment the *chef* produced a meal far better cooked than is usual in this country, where kitchen equipment is generally so much more costly and elaborate.

The kitchen was square and on either side were store-rooms, rooms for pastry-making, a still-room, and a vegetable-room, while the end nearest the restaurant was given up to service. It was there that the electric trolleys were loaded. These trolleys run on wheels, and on each of them is a  $\Lambda$ -shaped erection of shelves. A girl stands on the trolley end and works the electrical apparatus, each trolley fetching the required number of dishes of hot food, hot plates, etc., for its own section, returning with the dirty plates, etc., to the washing-up room.

After lunch we sat with the staff in their recreation-room, in which games of bagatelle and dominoes were going on. Some men were smoking, others reading; women were sewing industriously or sitting talking in gay groups with their friends, as best pleased them.

After lunch we visited the crèche, which is close by in a house built for the purpose within the last year. This crèche is for the accommodation of the babies of nursing mothers employed in the

factory. At the time we visited it there were twenty-seven babies who were visited by their mammas five times a day. The babies lived at the crèche altogether, mainly to avoid the danger of epidemic disease and also partly because their mothers might be on night shift. There is a room where the mothers go next to the entrance, then the clinic, then the bathing-room, and then the sleeping-room. The babies looked fat and well-liking, and one especially adorable little person had a head of straight black hair just like that which adorns the pate of a Japanese doll. I asked it how it did and it gurgled at me cheerfully, but one young lady was very much annoyed at the sight of us and shrieked with all the power of a remarkably fine pair of lungs.

The baby crèche is spotlessly clean, decorated throughout in blue and white, and the Messieurs Citroën, their doctors and nurses evidently believe in the value of fresh air. For the workers themselves there is an infirmary in which a doctor and nine nurses are employed, and four hundred to five hundred patients pass through each day. We saw a nurse dressing a cut hand, and in the dental clinic watched the dentist and his two women assistants in their spotless overalls attending to the stopping of teeth.

We went through several of the workshops, which were very much the same as those which I

have seen in our own great industrial towns. The same kind of electric trolley which was used in the restaurant was also employed in the workshops.

The way in which the wages were paid was interesting, for the whole of the staff could be paid in thirty-seven seconds, each worker presenting himself with his note at one of a row of hatchways marked with the figure corresponding with that on his note, the note being immediately exchanged for the money due to him.

Our last visit was to the cinematograph and conference hall belonging to the establishment, where on the film we saw reacted all that we had witnessed during the day. In the conference hall concerts and entertainments took place, and I cherish as a remembrance of the Quai de Javal some programmes, the designs of which were the work of employees of the factory.

Another extremely interesting visit was that which we paid to the works of Messrs. Renault.

Here some 25,000 hands are employed, 8000 of whom are women and 200 children. I believe the restaurant system adopted at the Renault works was originally organised by M. Duval, whose restaurants are a feature of Parisian life. Now it is under the management of a co-operative society, controlled by a committee of the workers, on which committee a member of the firm is nominated to serve.



Unlike the restaurant at the Citroën works the Renault Restaurant was divided into three :—

(1) A restaurant for the staff where meals were served *à la carte*, also a special dining-room for those who wished for lunch at a fixed price of 3.50 fr. with coffee and wine included.

(2) A restaurant for the employees where the men were charged 1.50 fr. and the women 1.20 fr. The bill of fare consisted of *hors d'œuvre*, meat, vegetables, cheese or dessert.

(3) A canteen where meals brought by the work-people could be re-heated, and this was used by whole families. As M. Renault said : “ We extend hospitality to them.” There was no charge for this hospitality, the great object being to make it unnecessary for the employees to patronise places where they would be expected and encouraged to drink.

Some 6000 persons were served each day, including 2500 who brought their own meals to be re-heated.

The midday meal was the only meal served, but weak, cold coffee with bread was distributed during the day at a charge of a halfpenny. Tea was not very popular and the management had not thought of trying to popularise barley water. They were, however, introducing oatmeal porridge. I wonder if they have since done so, for not long

ago I received a letter from one of the interpreters with our Army saying that he wished for several recipes for porridge as it was such a good dish. "It is a pity French people do not know of it," he remarked.

For the workers on night shift a cup of soup was provided for one penny and meals brought could be re-heated.

It is always supposed that French people live on soup, but in reality they do not like it at midday and neither at Renaults' or Citroëns' was it served, except in Renaults' works during the night, when one penny was charged for a quarter *litre*.

Puddings were rarely served and none of the large steamers seen in our canteens and kitchens were provided.

Renaults' staff restaurant consisted of a central kitchen and two dining-rooms on either side—one for men and one for women, furnished with comfortable chairs and tables with table-cloths. The furniture was made by the firm and the washing was done by the firm also. In the dining-room there was a special counter for fruit and cheese very prettily set out.

A hot plate ran the whole length of the service hatchways.

There was a flat roof to this building and we were told that it was proposed to make a roof-garden shortly, also to arrange billiard and writing rooms.

At Renaults' the heads of departments have a 1½-hour interval for their dinner, the engineers 1 hour. The meals were distributed by volunteer workers who were allowed to leave their work ten minutes earlier than others and obtained their meal free of charge in lieu of payment. A rota is kept of these volunteer workers.

It is perhaps no wonder that the cooking in such restaurants is better than that generally to be found in similar places in England, for the *chef* in No. 1 Restaurant was paid £26 per month with board, lodging, and washing in addition.

The service in the three staff dining-rooms (*à la carte* and one lunch at a fixed price) was excellent, while in the work-people's restaurant, No. 2, which is in a separate building, everything was clean, well arranged, and attractive. The whole of this restaurant, with its little garden, was put up in forty days. At the entrance are well-set-out counters where wine and bread are purchased and the tables are all of polished wood.

The *hors d'œuvre* and dessert were ready beforehand, neatly and daintily set out, and there were arrangements for the diners to keep their table-napkins in separate compartments.

Extra portions were to be bought, but it was unusual to do so. Egg or meat dishes cost 60 *centimes*, vegetables, dessert, and coffee from 20 c. to 40 c. I observed that the legs of mutton which

were being served on that day were cut quite differently from ours. The meat was sliced nearly raw and then re-heated in sauce or gravy.

The dining-rooms for those who brought their own meals to be re-heated were in a separate building again.

We were informed that a crèche was about to be provided. The Co-operative Society runs a shop for the employees, and are in a position to guarantee the ordinary supplies of food, provisions, coal, and clothes. The turnover of this shop was some £20,000 a month and it was only open to employees of the factory and paid a dividend of 7 per cent. At the time that we visited this shop it was full of women in skirts and blouses, their hair prettily dressed, carrying bags and baskets. I noted some of the prices, eggs being from 3 fr. to 3.50 fr. a dozen, Gruyère cheese 4 fr. per lb., potatoes 6 c. per kilo, fillet of beef 4.25 fr. per demi-kilo, *entre côte* 3.50 fr., veal scollops 4 fr., leg of mutton 3.20 fr., shoulder 2.50 fr.

About four hundred families belonged to this co-operative society, and judging by the purchases of the women, wages are sufficiently high for them to fare well in spite of high prices. In the shop were biscuits, truffled galantine, and wine, all of which were being bought in abundance.

I have at different times visited a large number of canteens and National Kitchens with and



without restaurants attached, and I cannot but own that the cooking and service in France is considerably better than that which prevails in England. Even in the little wine shops and restaurants grouped round the industrial works, although the service was far inferior to that in the large French canteens, I saw nothing as rough and as dirty as I have seen in England. The Citroën Canteen, of course, as I have said, did not pay, but the work-people's canteen at the Renault establishment, which does, I believe, pay, was the perfection of cleanliness and niceness in its arrangement.

We also visited the canteen of the Crédit Lyonnais, which is under the direction of M. Duval; M. Bertrand, the representative of M. Duval, being kind enough to be our guide. This canteen is on a par with the Dining Club of our General Post Office and of the Dining Club at the London County Council Hall. Here, again, the Duval system has been adopted for the staff restaurants, that is a central kitchen with a dining-room on either side, one for men and one for women and girls. The walls were of distempered cement, the floors tiled and the tables marble-topped. The seats were iron, round, and of unattractive appearance.

Attached to the restaurant was a roofed terrace and nicely furnished covered-in rest rooms. The object of the restaurant was to provide good meals

for the Bank employees at a low price. As far as I could make out the employees were charged about half-price, the difference being paid by the *Crédit Lyonnais*. The bank adopted this system because it ensures that the employees at all events had one good meal per day.

About 1500 persons dine here every day and there are three services. Each employee is registered at the canteen and given a number, and table napkins are supplied and kept in numbered pigeon-holes. Here the system is that a list of prices is put up each day at the entrance and each customer buys a ticket for the amount which he is going to spend and gives it in at a hatchway, there being various hatchways for various edibles. The diner then passes a "checker," whose duty it is to see that the plates carried tally with the price the diner has paid. The diner collected on his way to the table numerous forks and a table napkin, the tables being already laid with water jugs, tumblers, and cruet. There was a *séparate* buffet for the sale of cheese, salad, fruit, etc., and for wine and beer. Omelettes and poached eggs were only cooked to order.

There was also an arrangement made so that the customer who preferred to bring his own food could re-heat it free of charge and free of table money. No tea was served and no pudding was allowed a place on the menu.

The cooking in this restaurant was similar to that usually found in the Duval restaurants, and distinctly better than places of the same calibre in England. On the day of our visit prices were as follows :—

Œufs sur la plat (poached eggs, 2), 35 centimes.

Omelettes tomates (tomato omelettes), 50 cts.

Colin mayonnaise (mayonnaise of hake), 40 cts.

Colin sauce capres (hake and caper sauce),  
35 cts.

Pommes sautées (sautéed potatoes), 20 cts.

Épinards aux croûtons (spinach), 20 cts.

Nouilles milanaise (macaroni), 20 cts.

Salade de chicoree frisée (chicory salad), 15 cts.

Raisins et poire (grapes and pears), 20 cts.

Café (coffee), 15 cts.

The staff employed here consisted of a *chef* with five helpers in the kitchen in addition to washers-up and those who removed the dirty plates, etc.

We sat for some time in the prettily arranged roof terrace, where women and girl employees were reading, writing, and in many cases engaged in doing very beautiful *broderie anglaise*, or as we sometimes call it “Madeira work.”

As we went about Paris everywhere we saw men in khaki. Seldom our own men, but numbers of Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders, and

Americans. It was naturally deeply interesting to us to visit some of the clubs and canteens organised for their comfort.

Perhaps the most important of these is the British Army and Navy Leave Club, which occupies the *Hôtel Moderne* in the *Place de la République*. It is an enormous organisation and its objects are to provide a hearty welcome, a club room with all the British newspapers, lunch, tea, and supper at popular prices, lounge, writing and billiard rooms, evening entertainments, an information bureau, baggage room, safe deposit, stalls for tobacco, newspapers, and toilet requisites.

The representatives of the club wear armlets and meet the leave trains, and from the time that the soldier finds himself in charge of the club he is fathered and mothered in such a way as should win the everlasting gratitude of those fathers and mothers so far away from the boys they love. The chairman is Mr. W. R. Hearn, Consul-General, the vice-chairman, the Hon. Philippe Roy, Commissioner-General for Canada, the hon. secretaries, Miss Decima Moore and the Rev. A. S. V. Blunt, and the hon. treasurer Mr. Evelyn Toulmin.

Miss Decima Moore took charge of us on our visit and was kind enough to take us all round the building, explaining different arrangements for our benefit.



We also paid a visit to "A Corner in Blighty" at No. 20 Place Vendôme. Miss Lily Butler is the founder and manager, and Mrs. Sewell, Mrs. Beckles Willson, the Rev. F. A. Cardew, Capt. Harmer, and Sir John Pilter are members of the Advisory Committee. The "Corner" is under the patronage of the British Ambassador and other influential people.

As we walked up the stairs to Blighty (once the premises of a fashionable German dressmaker who, I think, someone told me proved to be a spy) our ears were gladdened by the familiar strains of "If you were the only Girl in the World." Later, talking to a soldier enjoying a "Blighty" tea: "It's a comfort," he observed, "to be somewhere where you understand what they say to you. You feel lost in a place like Paris, and that's a fact."

More good work for the soldiers is done by the Women's Emergency Canteen at the Gare du Nord, which is open day and night. This canteen is situated in underground and rat-ridden cellars, not ideal for the purpose, but the very best is made of them, and if the premises are not all that they might be the same cannot be said of the welcome which awaits the soldiers. Hospitality was being extended to some Belgian soldiers, and, I think, I am right in saying that this canteen did wonderful work for the refugees, both in the early part of the War and again last March when count-

less families had to fly before the oncoming German troops.

There is also a Y.M.C.A. at 160 Rue Montmartre, but I am not certain that this was in existence at the time that we were in Paris, and there are probably many other places where work is carried out for the good of our Armies, and doubtless since then much has been done to provide a welcome for the ever-increasing number of American soldiers who visit Paris.

Another visit which we paid while in Paris was to the Gare La Chapelle (the goods station of the Gare du Nord), now the receiving-station for wounded coming into Paris from the north. Here Madame Thurneysen, the Directrice, was kind enough to show us what the Association of *Les Dames Française* do for the comfort of their countrymen. What was originally a great goods shed has been fitted up as a temporary hospital. The approach from the station yard has been made easy so that the cars conveying the wounded shall move smoothly.

There is a great garage where the cars and their drivers wait, and adjoining this, the receiving *salon* into which the trains actually run, so that it is only necessary to lift the stretchers from the train on to the rests provided for them.

Each lady is allotted sixteen of these numbered rests and is responsible for her sixteen stretcher

cases. Other arrangements are made for sitting cases, for those who are but slightly wounded, and for officers. From this receiving *salon* a corridor is entered, on the other side of which are the kitchen and operating room, for in some cases an operation must be performed immediately, or the wound re-dressed. Sometimes, alas! this room must be set aside as a death chamber. There are also storerooms and bedrooms for the ladies who may be on night duty waiting the incoming of trains, a sitting-room, workroom, and doctor's room.

The Association receives notice by telegram generally some two hours in advance of the arrival of the train, and everything is made ready for the invalids. One *marmite* full of soup is allowed to each sixteen stretchers, and the supply of soup is kept ready in a haybox. Soup, bread and meat, or bread and jam, fruit, etc., are packed in baskets holding sufficient for the sixteen patients allotted to one lady, together with cigarettes and refreshing drinks. Baskets for dirty crockery, etc., painted a different colour from those used for the clean articles, back rests, cushions, books, and papers for those well enough to need them are all put in readiness.

Imagine what it must mean to men coming straight from the field clearing station to be able to wash face and hands; to be moved comfortably on their stretchers, another pillow placed under

their heads, a pillow so placed as to ease the aching of a wounded limb ; to receive hot food, cool drinks, the refreshing cigarette ; the love and care of skilled and devoted women.

Here the doctors make their examinations and it is decided to which hospital the patient shall be drafted, so that every man shall go to the institution which is best able to deal with his special case.

I have never seen anything more beautifully organised than this receiving-place for the wounded, so spotlessly clean, so attractively planned, and so economically run. As of course the numbers received must vary, arrangements are made that any food which will not keep is used for refugees, who call for it.

Three doctors are on duty night and day, and the receiving-station cannot be seen except by a special permit.

The work of the ladies at *La Chapelle* is unpaid, and much of the expense is borne by voluntary contributions, the Service de Santé paying only forty centimes each man towards the cost of upkeep.

Had we seen no more than I have here described while in France, our visit would have been a treasured memory, but I can never be sufficiently grateful to M. Clémentel for arranging that we should visit some of the devastated country captured by the Germans in 1914, recaptured,



again entered by the Germans, and now once more in French possession.

It was decided that we should leave Paris at eight-thirty by car, travelling via Senlis and Compiègne to Noyon and Ham and Jussy, approaching within about seven or eight miles of the front lines and returning to Paris that night—a drive of about 175 miles.

At eight-thirty a great grey-blue military car arrived at the door of our hotel in which was M. Albert Faidides (*Attaché au Cabinet du Ministre du Commerce de l'Industrie, des Postes et des Télégraphes*), who had so kindly chaperoned us on our visit to the Citroën Works and then to the Renault Company.

It was a rather damp, cool morning as we drove out through the north of Paris, but in that city of early risers everyone was well astir. Country people were coming into the markets, and our chauffeur, who drove as the taxi-cabmen of Paris drive—with a considerable addition of military dash, early made me feel that I must put away all fears for my personal safety; he would drive as he would drive and therefore the sooner I ceased to worry about it the better.

I have to trust chiefly to memory for the details of our day's sight-seeing, for travelling at so great a pace the notes which I endeavoured to make proved for the most part illegible. I remember

that we drove along great paved roads, and as we came to Meaux the rain was ceasing but the sky was still grey and misty. Here M. Faidides reminded us of the Army of General Gallieni which in September, 1914, dashed out from Paris in motor-cars, omnibuses and in taxi-cabs, eight men crammed into one cab—those men who fought the Battle of the Marne, who saved France and saved England.

Out to our left lay that great battle-field of the Marne. Keeping to the north and slightly to the east along straight paved avenues we passed a huge aerodrome, coming presently to the village of Loevre, full of soldiers in grey-blue uniform standing about in the grey paved street. Along a tree-bordered road we drove until turning sharply round the corner we entered a village of buff-washed houses on which were pasted great placards in blue lettering, and there gathered round the inn was another party of grey-blue soldiers. Later we passed the forest of Chantilly, beautiful in its autumn tints, the stems of the slender silver birch trees rearing up from the ground like mottled serpents. It was into this forest that the Uhlans came in the black days of September, 1914.

Passing a great hospital we came to Senlis, once a lovely peaceful cathedral city girdled by an old Roman wall. We stopped the car and walked

through some of its streets. I looked through a gate of beautiful wrought ironwork into what had once been a garden, and was now a wilderness of stones and crumbled bricks and plaster. Here the side walls of a house still stood, there the front of a dwelling had fallen to the ground, leaving exposed to the view the inner part of the house. It was as if some naughty giant child had torn away the door from its giant doll's house. In one room the walls, covered with a gay rose-patterned paper, stained and torn, still supported a gilt-framed picture.

Not content with bombarding this town the enemy set the houses alight one by one, and so the story goes, took Eugène Odont, the Mayor, to watch his town burning. "See," said the German officer, striking the Frenchman on the shoulder in a hideous travesty of good-fellowship, "see, *Monsieur le Maire*, how well your town burns," and later marched him with six fellow-citizens, three of them men over sixty, and one a lame boy of seventeen, and shot them in a field and buried them in a ditch like dogs.

It is a fact, I believe, that the city of Senlis took no part in the massacre of St. Bartholomew, nor did she set up a guillotine during the Revolution, and so deserved a kinder fate than was meted out to her.

In 1594 Henry of Navarre made his entry into

Paris. He rested at Senlis on the eve of his entry into the great city. "It is only God who can stay our entry into Paris," he cried.

The Germans, it is said, made the same boast when they came to Senlis in September, 1914. They thought that their task was almost done. Ten days later, after the Battle of the Marne, when in full retreat a letter was found in which the writer boasted: "Three enemies have now learned that they cannot stand against us—the Belgians, French, and English." If the man who wrote those words is still alive he has lived to learn the untruth of his words.

Beyond Senlis we stopped again. At the crossing of two roads was set a great shrine, the date upon it September 2nd, 1914. Here, so ran the legend, "in spite of all right and all humanity the Germans shot women and children and then brought their guns to bear upon a hospital," and then followed the words: "*N'oubliez jamais*" ("Never forget").

And, as ever in life, tragedy and comedy go hand in hand, our chauffeur suddenly put on the brake, the car bucked, and I nearly fell over on to poor M. Faïdides. From a side turning there advanced into the main road a strange little equipage something like a bathing machine, driven by an ancient man in black broadcloth, who wore a child's straw sailor hat with ribbons



dangling down his back. As he turned the corner the doors of the bathing machine opened and out fell a large and most undressed-looking pink pig, which nothing abashed began to rootle in the gutter. His attention arrested by the shouts of the chauffeur and the tootling of the motor-horn, the old man checked the ancient grey horse, clambered down from his machine, seized upon the pig by its hind legs and trundled it off exactly as if it had been a wheelbarrow and disappeared within the gates of a courtyard.

From this time onward I recollect seeing but four animals, one a cow with a string round its neck, led by an old peasant woman to graze along the roadside, another a goat which had clambered on to the wall which bordered a street leading up to a little church set high above the red roofs and grey houses of a village spared, why I do not know, by the destroying hand of the enemy, and a pair of cream-coloured oxen working near Compiègne.

Compiègne, it is said, had been selected as the Kaiser's headquarters when his victorious army should enter Paris, and for that reason it had been spared. Over the wooden bridge we drove through the forest of Compiègne, and once by the roadside a strange sight met our eyes—a group of what looked like great pantomime rats were standing—men in gas-masks drilling.

From this time onwards we met no civilian traffic, only great grey-blue motor lorries travelling to and fro between Paris and the front. At intervals we passed gangs of German prisoners looking well fed and clothed, working apparently quite amicably under the direction of their French guards, Chinese, neat in khaki blouses, breeches, and puttees, and Algerian and Portuguese labourers.

Here we were in a fruit country with great apple orchards and avenues of apple trees, and then soon there were neither apple orchards nor avenues, but everywhere trees lying dead, hacked down by the Germans before they retreated. Now the sun was breaking through the clouds and there were great patches of blue in the sky, but on earth desolation. Everywhere great trees had been felled and left to lie in cross-stitch pattern upon the roads, while roads and bridges had been destroyed to delay the advance of the French. By then the trees had been cleared away, but their stumps rose nakedly from the weed-choked borders of the roads. There were no more villages, nothing but heaps of stones and plaster crumbled to dust. In the fields of that beautiful agricultural country so rich before the War, now gashed by trenches and pock-marked by shells, weeds flourished and amongst them coiled the rusted remains of wire entanglements. To a little wood we came, amongst the trees of which were graves, and mounting

guard over this lonely burying-place the figure of Christ upon the crucifix. And so through that great tract of desolated country we journeyed to Noyon. Just before we entered the town I suddenly looked out and saw before us an enormous hole in the road. Whether the chauffeur saw it or whether by this time holes in roads were matters of little moment to him I do not know, but putting on speed he took that chasm at a leap which caused me to bound from my seat and return to it with a jerk of the neck which I felt for many a long day.

At Ham we stopped for lunch. The chief hotel of the little town had been used by German officers as their mess, and a few months earlier instead of two English ladies, one French gentleman, a French soldier, and our chauffeur, the dining-room had been filled with German officers waited upon by the very girl who now waited upon us, and who provided for our refreshment potato salad, little almost round flat-fish, slightly muddy of taste but beautifully fried, *blanquette de veau*, cheese, and little white grapes, red and white wine, and coffee. While waiting for our meal we watched some French cavalry in the paved place mount and ride away to *La Guerre* and some American Red Cross cars drive in.

After lunch we walked to the old castle of Ham, once the prison of Napoleon III—now in ruins,

blown up, as an old man told us, "with a noise like the end of the world."

Returning to the little town we met a girl in khaki carrying a camera. She looked English and proved to be American. We talked and she took us back with her to a little house where she and some other ladies, amongst them an American woman doctor—Dr. Killiam—were helping with the work of reconstruction. They had stores of clothes, saucepans, and bedding, and were helping to rebuild some of the houses and restock the little farms. Alas! that only a few months later all their work should come to an end and the people once again forced to fly before the invading armies.

In the street of Ham we shopped, buying in true tripper style picture postcards. We talked with the old man and his married daughter who kept the little stationer's shop. "No, the Germans were not cruel; severe, yes, but not cruel, not, that was to say, if we obeyed. The children? Yes, they had been sent away for the most part, but the others"—the old man shrugged his shoulders—"it was their home, where else could they go?"

When the Germans left they had not destroyed the houses of Ham, but they had spoiled or taken with them much of their contents. This old man and his daughter were philosophical, but they bore upon their faces the tale of those anxious months through which they had lived. I bought



in that little shop for 25 centimes a book entitled : *100 Salads for All Seasons*.

And then, our chauffeur refreshed, we drove off again faster even than before, through Chauny to Blérancourt and Jussy, and there again left the car and stood by the canal. A temporary bridge had been built across it, and along its shell-torn banks fluttered shabby remnants of painted *camouflage* like the wings and flies in a deserted theatre. We stood there wrapped in the silence of desolation broken only by the distant thudding of the guns, and at each thud a jagged piece of wall near by trembled and now and then a morsel of plaster fell.

Then on again. It seemed as if the world had turned to stones and dust and weeds and rusted wire. Away to the right was what had once been a railway station. An engine lay toppled over on its side, the metal rails curled fiercely yet helplessly about it as though they had once had life and had died writhing in some great fire. Then the rain came down again and the sky turned to a leaden grey. And so we came back to Compiègne.

Later the rain ceased once more, and as the light began to fade and the last streaks of the setting sun lay in the sky the wet grey paved road seemed to rise up in front of us like a band of steel, and then the purr of the engine deepened and the great car had eaten up that mile of hilly road and

was throbbing on through the fast-falling dusk to Paris.

Lying sleepless that night I saw again the great painted shrine—the cowering figure of a woman, in her arms a child, and the words: “Never forget.”

Thank God that nations as individuals can forget and yet remember—forgetting that which is best forgotten, remembering that which must be remembered if humanity shall be saved from yet another Crucifixion.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE MINISTRY UNDER MR. CLYNES

I say good-bye and cease "to oblige"—Mr. Clynes—From mill boy to Minister—The Consumers' Council—The wonderful work of the Ministry—Mr. Hoover—Cows in High Street, Kensington—Mr. Sydney Walton—What war is teaching us—Sympathy and understanding.

WHEN it became known that compulsory rationing would be enforced I felt that my work in the Ministry of Food had come to an end.

I saw Lord Rhondda and suggested that I should resign my appointment, but he did not wish me to do so. He told me that changes were to be made and my services might be required, therefore I did as I was bid and waited to see what would occur, but as the weeks passed it seemed more and more clear to me that the time had come for me to return to my own work. After all I, like the charlady, had only come "to oblige" during a time of special stress and that time was over. I had put away a novel half finished and other work in which I am deeply interested connected with the re-housing of the working classes awaited me. Almost at the

same moment Lord Northcliffe was kind enough to offer me a choice of two positions ; one involved leaving England which I could not then arrange to do, the other was to create and take charge of a *Daily Mail* Food Bureau.

Lord Northcliffe's methods with those who work for him are after my own heart. "Can you do this ?" he asks. "Yes," you answer. "Then go and do it," he says, affords every possible assistance and then leaves you to stand or fall by your own exertions, giving generous praise if you succeed and short shrift, no doubt, if you fail. I would that there had been more persons of his temper in the Ministry of Food.

So again I asked to be released. Lord Rhondda was still kind enough to wish me to remain and desired me to see Colonel Weigall, who had been appointed president of the then newly appointed Food Survey Board. This I did, but finally decided that it would be better that I should cease to be a civil servant, if indeed I ever was one. Are people who come in "to oblige" counted as members of that select society ? Lord Rhondda bid me still consider myself in close connection with the Ministry, asking that I should continue to work for the cause of Food Economy and assuring me that I must always feel myself free to apply to the Ministry for any information and assistance I might require. Since then I have worked in close



touch with the Food officials, who have showed themselves extraordinarily kind to me.

Lord Rhondda wrote me a charming letter of farewell, which naturally I value very much.

Had it been possible to take a holiday between the time of leaving the Ministry and beginning my new work I should have done so, for I was dreadfully tired ; but as one can always do what one has to do I set to work again and soon became immersed in the varied interests of my new employment.

It was in March, 1918, that I resigned my appointment. Soon afterwards Lord Rhondda fell ill and in July he died. I attended the Memorial Service at St. Margaret's, Westminster, which was made still more sad by the sudden death of a member of the congregation sitting near to me. It was not until the end of July that I had an interview with Mr. Clynes in his new capacity of third Food Controller.

Mr. Clynes was born in Oldham in 1869, one of a family existing on a labourer's wage. At the age of ten he was working as a half-timer in the jenny-gate at the Dowry Mills, Oldham, and at the age of twelve he was doing a man's work in these same mills. His frail physique is the result of these early days of hardship ; yet overworked and overstrained as was this child, he was possessed with a thirst for knowledge, desiring to read for the most

part those books which dealt with the conditions of humanity and the revolt of the heart and mind against that grinding down of the poor which so many of us, and even those who accept the creed of Christ, regard so placidly. Fortunately this little mill boy, struggling to educate himself, had his lighter moments ; he became an exceptionally accomplished clog-dancer.

The fees for his night school this lad saved out of his earnings—and, so the story goes, nearly got “ the sack ” for studying English grammar when he should have been at work.

I have myself remarked the precise choice of words made by Mr. Clynes—he uses words as one who has studied them, who has a love of phraseology. It did not surprise me then to learn that while still a boy he bought a second-hand dictionary and spent his spare moments during the next few months in writing it out from beginning to end, thus memorising the words and forming a vocabulary. Of a truth he knows of what he speaks when he refers to “ the grim university of the mills and mines,” for it was in that university he obtained his own education.

It is said that at one time Clynes and an Irish friend who lived in Oldham used to practise oratory in the seclusion of an old quarry in order that they might take a part in local discussion in the Trade Union movement. A passion for a new and greater

England governed all his work and governs it now that he is Food Controller, and while he loves the poor he has no hatred of the rich : for he is endowed with a just and kindly mind which enables him to see what is good in persons of every class, and he has met and worked with people of every class and of many nationalities. For example, he was delegate for the Oldham Trades and Labour Council to the Council of the Oldham Chamber of Commerce, which gave him an opportunity of sitting with employers and dealing with matters affecting more directly employers' interests. For many years past he has been the president of the National Union of General Workers and chairman of the National Federation of Labourers' Unions, a body which covers in its various constituent units three-quarters of a million workers. He has represented national labour interests at conferences and gatherings of various kinds in the United States, Canada, France, Germany, Holland, and other countries, and he lately said that the experience which he had obtained from such work abroad had convinced him of the futility of at present attempting—at any rate, and especially during war time—to force conferences of an international character upon men who are not in a frame of mind to discuss reasonably their most profound differences. He recalled in this connection an incident which occurred in peace time some twenty-five years ago at a con-

ference in Switzerland, where the discussion grew so heated that the disputants threw knives with which to point their arguments !

From mill boy to Minister—it is a career of which any man might well be proud. I who am acquainted with him as Minister and who know something of the life of industrial towns picture his early days. I can see him with many another little lad hunching along to the mill in the cold dusk of a winter morning : I can see the light from the lamps reflected on the streets coated with shining mud and hear the sound of the clogs and the Lancashire talk as men and boys, shawled women and girls throng home from work. I can picture, too, some of the little children in those towns, left to the care of an old granny, herded together in a tiny room, while mother is at the mill, and mother before and after her day's work cooking, cleaning, and washing and caring for her little ones. If the lives of the boys and men were hard, the lives of the women were harder, and Mr. Clynes knows it—who better ?

Mr. Clynes is a fine speaker, and both in public speeches and in private conferences he has the art of setting out his facts so clearly that they impress themselves sharply upon the mind of the listener.

An interesting story is told of Mr. Clynes as a speaker. Lady Riddell once attended one of his meetings and was so much impressed that she



wrote his name upon a piece of paper and gave it to her husband, saying that she prophesied that Clynes was a man who would become famous. Lord Rhondda at another time also heard Mr. Clynes speak, and was so deeply impressed by him that when he accepted the position of Food Controller he asked Mr. Lloyd George that Mr. Clynes should become his Parliamentary Secretary. There was a great friendship between the two, different as they were in many ways, and both men of very independent character.

The first time I saw Mr. Clynes was in the room formerly occupied by Sir Charles Bathurst at Grosvenor House soon after his appointment as Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry, and my last interview with him was when he had become Food Controller and was installed in the room formerly allotted to Lord Rhondda. When I arrived Mr. Clynes was still talking with a deputation and Mr. Sydney Walton came out to me to assure me that I should not be kept waiting long. Almost at that moment the deputation began to stream into the waiting-room, there to continue in conversation with the second secretary, Mr. Beveridge.

Mr. Clynes looked very small in his large room with its massive furniture. For a moment or two he walked about and then sat down at the desk at which Lord Rhondda had sat on the occasion of

my farewell interview. We spoke of Lord Rhondda, the result of rationing and of the work of the Ministry in general.

"I am in the limelight, I get the credit," said Mr. Clynes, "but it's the good men we have here who deserve it."

Discussing past events I mentioned that many people now said that there never had been any danger of food shortage.

"They are wrong," replied Mr. Clynes sharply, "wrong; there was danger, real danger." (I recalled words used by Lord Devonport one day to me: "Months of black anxiety.") And then we spoke of the increased demand for coal, the sacrifice of comfort which must be made, the influence which the coming into the War of America must exert. At that moment Mr. Sydney Walton entered—Mr. Hoover had arrived. I at once began to say good-bye, but kind Mr. Clynes would not have me baulked of my talk with him. "If you don't mind waiting I can see you again. Would you like to see Mr. Hoover if I can arrange it?" That was impossible, for Mr. Hoover had an appointment with the Prime Minister and left England the following day.

After a few minutes Mr. Clynes came to me in the waiting-room and we finished our talk there, he walking up and down the little room. Mr. Walton, who takes great care of the Minister, had

had the windows opened wide in the other room because it had become so hot and with the windows open the noise was too great to allow of a comfortable conversation. We talked of National Kitchens and also of the work of the Consumers' Council, and then I said good-bye, receiving kind assurance from the Food Controller of his desire that I should continue to keep myself in close touch with the work of the Ministry.

If Lord Rhondda had that charm of manner which drew out the best in those who worked for him the Ministry is fortunate in that his successor also possesses it to a marked degree.

It is to Mr. Clynes when acting as Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food that we owe the idea of forming a Consumers' Council, which was brought into being on the 1st of February, 1918. This Council has no actual power, acting merely in an advisory capacity. Most people will, I think, agree that the dealer and the producer, or at all events the dealer, can be trusted to express their point of view, but the consumers are an unorganised body and in need of assistance from a department whose main object it is to deal fairly with all classes. There is no class in the country which is not represented upon this Council, and therefore its power is great, but as no one can—or perhaps it would be wiser to say should—advise without knowledge, if the members of the Con-

sumers' Council knew nothing of any difficulty except those of the consumer the advice of its members would be of little use, so they have had to learn the business of Food Control.

Experts have attended these meetings to give them information: Sir Leo Chiozza Money has dealt with the intimate relationship between shipping and food: Lord Crawford has told them of the workings of the Wheat Commission: Sir Charles Bathurst has explained the intricacies of sugar control, and Mr. Wise, Colonel Strangeman and Major Carr have given courses of instruction on meat, margarine and vegetables.

The Council meets once a week, but further each member must work on an Advisory Committee, and is directly represented on the Committees dealing with orders, finance, storage, transport, etc. Therefore a member of this Council must work hard for the privilege of serving upon it. The existence of such Council ensures that the rights and opinions of the consumer are clearly stated and protected. The Food Controller's private secretaries, Mr. Sydney Walton and Mr. Syrett, act as secretaries to this Council.

The idea of the bringing together of the consumer and the official has now been extended, and the Rationing Section of the Ministry hold Labour conferences which are of great value—personally I am inclined to think that the Minister would be



wise not to confine the conferences to Labour but to extend them in every direction.

Since the days of Lord Devonport's appointment in December, 1916, the Ministry of Food has dealt with a gigantic task and with such success as was never anticipated. The functions of the Ministry of Food are—to control all supplies of home and imported foodstuffs ; to increase food production ; to protect the consumer by the control of prices and to distribute fairly the available supplies of essential foodstuffs. The Food Controller is responsible to the War Cabinet and the work of the Ministry is split up into sections. Some of these sections are controlled by commissions, others by individuals. There is of course a financial section and an invaluable costing department, and in addition to this machinery there is, as I have said, the Consumers' Council and the Labour conferences. The country is divided into sixteen areas and a Food Commissioner administers each area with the help of Food Control committees, of which there are some 2500. The last link in the chain of distribution is the retailer, roughly divided into co-operative societies, multiple shops, grocers' and general shops. By a carefully worked out system of registration and licensing of consumers, retailers and wholesalers equitable distribution of essential foodstuffs is arrived at. Of Ministry of Food officers there are, I believe, some four thousand,

but this number does not of course include officials and members of Food Control committees all over the country. I quote from an interesting article by Mr. Wm. Gallacher which appeared in the *Scottish Co-operator* and which explains better than I can hope to do the effect of the activities of the Ministry of Food :—

“ The Ministry of Food is the most gigantic and successful experiment in State socialism that the world has ever seen. It feeds the Army and Navy in addition to the civil population. It is concerned with the production and maintenance of supplies as well as with their distribution. Its buyers are to be found in every allied and neutral market in the world and their financial backing is the British Treasury. During 1917 the Wheat Commission purchased cereals to the value of £400,000,000. It buys not only for Britain but for France, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece. It is an international buyers' combine controlling the grain produced in every quarter of the globe where ships can sail. The Wheat Commission controls the flour mills of this country, and dictates the quantity and quality of their productions. Its daring experiment of reducing the price of the 4-lb. loaf to ninepence has been completely justified, though at a cost for that year of £40,000,000 per annum to the British taxpayer.

“ The Ministry of Food is a veritable triumph of organisation. To control all food supplies, feed an army in the field, a fleet at sea, and a nation at war seems an utterly impossible task for a Government department, yet the seemingly impossible has been accomplished. Considering the difficulties, supplies have been well maintained. Every grade of trader and producer has been fitted into the scheme of food distribution ; scores of articles of food have been listed and priced ; speculation in food has been severely checked ; and every man, woman and child of the forty-six millions in the United Kingdom has been registered in order to ensure an equitable distribution of essential foodstuffs. Food queues have practically disappeared ; public unrest due to bad food distribution is almost entirely gone and the machine runs with ever-increasing smoothness. The Ministry of Food is to be congratulated on the great work accomplished in so short a time.”

It is impossible to write of the work of the Ministry of Food and not include the name of Mr. Hoover, for to a great extent it is to him that we owe our daily bread. Before the War we imported nearly 65 per cent of our food supplies ; to-day, in order to utilise our shipping to the best advantage, we are compelled to concentrate it on the voyage, short compared for example with that

to Australia or New Zealand, across the Atlantic. It is Mr. Hoover who must fill those ships with food, or France, Italy and Great Britain together with neutral countries must suffer the horrors of hunger.

But although Mr. Hoover's name and fame are world-wide few people in this country, at all events, know much of his personality.

I only saw the United States Food Administrator once and that for a few seconds, as he was entering Mr. Clynes' room and I was leaving it, but his personality was so strong that I felt as if even in those seconds I had gained some knowledge of his character. I saw a heavily built man who moved quietly. He spoke and his voice was sad. Is it any wonder? Surely no human being who has seen what Herbert Hoover has seen of the tragedy of the invasion of Belgium could fail to show traces of that experience for the remainder of his life.

Few men yet in early middle age have learned more in the school of life than Mr. Hoover: his career is a romance. Born in America forty-three years ago, he comes of French ancestry on his mother's side and of Dutch ancestry on that of his father who was a Quaker. At the end of his school career Hoover, junior, went to California and entered the School of Mines at Stanford University, where he supported himself. At the age of twenty-one



he obtained work on American Government Geological Surveys and about a year later became the manager—in Australia—of a British mining firm. During these years apparently he cherished an affection for a Miss Loo Henry who had been a co-graduate with him at Stanford, and at the age of twenty-six he cabled to her, journeyed to San Francisco and there married her. His wife went out to China with him. Mr. Hoover took an active part in the defence of Tientsin during the Boxer rising and Mrs. Hoover organised the Red Cross work.

Leaving China Mr. Hoover came to England, where he lived at the Red House in Kensington, and I believe that by the terms of an old lease he is bound not to allow his cows to stray down Kensington High Street !

I recollect hearing a conversation about him during which one of the speakers remarked : “ Oh, all the world’s Hoover’s parish,” and certainly it is, for he developed the turquoise mines of Sinai, the iron mines of the Alps, the late Czar’s mining properties in Russia, besides interesting himself in various undertakings in Peru, South Africa and Burma. His wife, described to me as “ a charming, clever American woman,” shared his business interests and helped him in the work of translating *De Re Metallica*, by Agricola, who in 1530 wrote a work on metals and mining in

doggerel Latin which, until Mr. and Mrs. Hoover turned their attention to it, had baffled the translator.

When the year 1914 brought anguish to many nations Mr. Hoover had become the recognised base metal expert of the world, and was said to be earning an income of over £100,000 a year. He was to spend that great wealth to good advantage. On the declaration of war some hundred thousand Americans were stranded in London, unable to go home, and, owing to the moratorium and the difficulties of exchange, to change cheques. At the suggestion of the United States Ambassador, who was then Mr. Page, Mr. Hoover formed an American Relief Committee and straightened out the troubles of his countrymen. A little later the American Minister in Brussels, Mr. Whitlock, asked the help of Mr. Page to save the people of Belgium from starvation. Mr. Page turned to Mr. Hoover and in a few days the Commission for Relief in Belgium was formed. Since then the exertions of Mr. Hoover have kept the people of Belgium and Northern France from starvation.

The American Food Administrator writes better than he speaks, for it must be admitted that he is no speaker : even at small conferences his words are often inaudible. Through his written words, however, he can come close to his public :—

“ To those of us who have lived behind the

German lines no hour goes by but our hearts are haunted by the scenes of long lines of emaciated women and children who to-day and for three years have gathered in Belgium for their daily bread from America. That pittance, their all, represents scarcely the waste from American tables. This winter these lines have, for the first time during the War, gathered in the poorer sections of France and Italy. Not only should this pull at our hearts, but beyond this it is a menace to our very safety. In the presence of a common enemy we sit at a common table with all people defenders. Is the daily call of the Food Administration for less waste, for simpler living, to eat only for strength, not a call to conscience? Is it not a vital call of defence?"

Mr. Hoover is said to be a man of moods. A woman who used to go to his home and who admired him greatly told me that once he took her into dinner and never spoke, and the next time talked without ceasing.

One of his friends says of him: "Hoover is downright direct, but capable of becoming extraordinarily persuasive. He is courageous, sincere. Above all he has imagination, he can make such appeal to the people as will touch not only their reason but their hearts."

Just after that conversation I came upon these words of Mr. Hoover's: "Aside from the prime

necessity of protecting our independence and our institutions, there is but one possible benefit from the War, and that is the stimulation of self-sacrifice in the people; the lifting of its ideals and the diversion of its concentration upon the purely material things in life to a strengthening of its higher purposes. I do not say that such compensations are full compensation for war, but they are at least an amelioration of the terrible currents that are threatening our existence. Therefore, we felt that if there could be brought home to the sense of every American household the necessity of this personal and individual sacrifice we would have spread the opportunity for service beyond those who sacrifice in giving their sons to immolation on the national altar."

It is to bring out this spirit of personal and individual sacrifice, this "opportunity for service," that we need propaganda—propaganda not designed to rouse an insensate hate but such as will, when this War is won, make us fit to benefit by the sacrifice of those we hold dearest.

. . . . .

Looking back over my year's work in the Ministry of Food I am thankful that I was granted the opportunity of undertaking it. I began my work for the Government with sympathy for, and I think some knowledge of, the lives of workers of



various grades. Throughout twelve months of official work I studied still further the history of the Labour movement and availed myself of every chance to learn under what conditions labour labours. Much I saw and more I heard. My experiences have left me with no quarrel with the rich, no hysterical adoration of the poor. Some of the rich deserve riches and make admirable use of them ; some of the poor deserve poverty and make vile use of it. But this I think I know—revolution must come and it is right that it should come. The working people will no longer consent to be the beasts of burden that they were, to drudge throughout their lives in a never-ending struggle to earn just enough money to make existence possible. Working men and women are now politically important, they are becoming better educated, labour has been raised to a position of influence and authority. And Labour asks for what ? For nothing more than any human being has a right to ask—a wage which will enable him to afford a decent and a healthy home, sufficient food, education, and a share of the pleasures of life, and these not won at such a price as makes of him a bent and broken thing, old before his time.

Revolution must come. Do not let us be afraid of the word. How changes shall be made, how the remodelling of labour conditions shall come to pass is yet to be seen. But let us pray that for

once the demands of those who have so little shall be met with sympathy by those who have so much. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do," and truly we knew not what we did when we set up a god of material wealth and made sacrifice of humanity to it.

On the blood-soaked earth of battle-fields men of all classes have fought together—in industrial life they must learn to work together. Women of all classes have been brought together—together they must remain, gaining ever a greater knowledge of and a greater sympathy for each other. Let us lift the bars of the social pens into which people of various classes have herded, for it is a wider education which we need—education gained at first hand in the "grim universities of the mills and mines," in the lower middle-class shop, in the great Government services. We all need to know each other better.

To-day as I write we speak of peace. Grant us peace amongst nations and peace at home, that man and woman may work together in unity of power and of purpose for the good of the child.

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